



James Ballinger, retiring director of the Phoenix Art Museum, was presented with a Visitor Champion award at the Visit Phoenix Annual Meeting. Ballinger (second from right) was honored for his 40 years of service to the museum. Flanking him (left to right): Visit Phoenix Chairman Win Holden, Visit Phoenix President & CEO Steve Moore, and Phoenix Vice Mayor James Waring.

Salacious Samuel Del Brocco Story Appears in *Miami New Times*

Executor of Will Questions Piece

By Todd McElwee

Roughly two weeks before John Snively is scheduled to face second degree murder charges on July 28 for the Sept. 2010 slaying of PCI Communications President & CEO Samuel Del Brocco, a *Miami New Times* story paints a speckled picture of the victim's secret gay life, including a multi-million-dollar estate payout to a former lover, Justin DeVinney. (The *Miami New Times* is a free,

alternative weekly newspaper distributed throughout south Florida.)

USAE spoke with the Executor of Del Brocco's estate, Carlos M. Larraz, President of the National Artists Corporation, about the piece. Del Brocco's longtime friend rejected some parts of the story and was incensed with its author, Michael E. Miller. Larraz said its author asked leading questions and he plans on contacting Miller soon.

He also explained the ongoing pro-

ceedings of the Samuel Francis Del Brocco Revocable Trust, to which all personal property was assigned in its namesake's will and how those assets were being distributed.

Miller did not respond to USAE's messages.

In the story, headlined "Millionaire's Murder Case Opens the Book on Flings With Male Porn Stars, Strippers," Miller describes a torrid love affair between

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National Speakers Association Pulls Back On Name Change

*Protestors Include
Speaker/Author Michael Hyatt*

By Todd McElwee

Weeks after announcing its rebranding as PLATFORM, the National Speakers Association (NSA) reversed its decision on July 14 under protest of members and the industry.

Shep Hyken, 2014-2015 NSA President, told USAE the association is continuing to explore a possible rebranding.

NSA unveiled its new moniker in San Diego during its Perform, NSA Convention from June 29-July 2. Hyken said NSA had been exploring rebranding for a more than two years in order to better reflect the constant diversification of its members, their talents, and professions. The transition was scheduled to take place during the first half of 2015.

The backlash, which Hyken said nobody expected, came immediately.

The major hiccup was noted speaker and best-selling author of the book *Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World*, Michael Hyatt, who is also the proprietor of a similarly named conference and subscription educational initiative. Hyatt took to both Twitter and Facebook to express his disappointment with NSA and questioned if it just failed to do the research or thought it could employ the moniker without notice.

Calling Hyatt a "gentleman," Hyken said NSA was aware of the author/

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Atlantic City Working To Transition From Gaming Destination

By Jonathan Trager

Atlantic City, the coastal destination that has long relied on slots and table games to draw tourists, is now a "destination in transition," Mayor Don Guardian said.

"We will endure the pain that comes with transitioning from an economy overly reliant on a single industry," he told reporters during a conference call on July 10. "We know there

are growing pains; they will diminish over time."

Facing proliferating gaming competition in neighboring states, the Jersey shore city has seen its gaming-generated revenue plummet in recent years. Revenue has fallen to \$2.8 billion, slightly more than half its 2006 peak of \$5.2 billion.

Not long ago, Atlantic City

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DMAI 30 Under 30 Honorees to Be Recognized

By Jonathan Trager

As the 2014 Annual Convention gets underway, attendees can expect to welcome and recognize a new class of up-and-coming destination-marketing professionals at the opening General Session on July 22. Profiles and photos of all of the honorees are found on the following pages.

Recipients of DMAI's 30 Under 30 honors also convened on July 21 at a kick-off meeting and orientation, where each honoree received an engraved, crystal sculpture in the shape of a book. Search-Wide (founding partner) and USAE are co-sponsoring the prestigious program.

The 30 Under 30 program "focuses on identifying and developing the talent of des-

tinuation-marketing professionals age 30 and under."

"Destination-marketing organizations' future belongs to its young leaders," said Michael Gehrisch, President & CEO of DMAI. "We need these professionals who are standing up and making things happen, not only in their own destination but around the world as the leaders of tomorrow in the travel & tourism industry."

Individuals selected have been awarded complimentary convention registration and three-night hotel accommodations. Throughout the year, participants will engage in a variety of professional development and volunteer activities for sustained industry engagement.

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NEWS

Daniel Spedden Hired as Executive Director of Hagerstown (Md.) CVB

By Jonathan Trager

Daniel Spedden, a former Maryland Park Service official who has long worked hand-in-hand with the CVB, has taken on the role of Executive Director.

A former park superintendent at Greenbrier State Park, Spedden retired in late 2013 after serving 30 years. His appointment was announced in mid-July.

Spedden has been a member of the CVB's board for more than 15 years and an executive board member for 8 years.

"I'm really excited about it," said Spedden, 54, about his new position. "I've been a beneficiary of the CVB's effort for many years."

The CVB actively promoted park sites that Spedden managed, including more

than 200 campsites. Part of Spedden's territory included three museums and two national historic monuments: The George Washington Monument in Washington Monument State Park and War Correspondence Memorial Arch at Gathland State Park.

Spedden, who grew up in Baltimore County, has lived in Hagerstown for 23 years. He said he's in love with the rolling hills and small town atmosphere, and he didn't want to leave.

Married for 29 years with a son, he replaces Thomas B. Riford, who announced last December that he'd be departing for a job with Homewood Retirement Centers.

"I was very happy for Tom, because I knew where he was going was a great

fit for that job," Spedden told USAE. "He was hand-picked.... At the same time I was worried about the transition."

Spedden added that he and Riford remain friends, so he can count on Riford if he needs advice. The hiring process for Riford's successor began four months ago with a nationwide search.

"When we got down to our final candidates, we had a lot of hard questions for them, and Dan was able to step up to that plate," said CVB Chairperson Julie Rohm. "He's ready to take our leadership to a new level. It's going to be a different perspective and we're very excited."

Spedden and his family are season ticketholders for the Hagerstown Suns, a minor league baseball affiliate of the Washington Nationals.



Daniel Spedden

Del Brocco

Continued from page 1

Del Brocco and DeVinney, a former adult model and wrestler who would go on to work at PCI Communications and accompany Del Brocco regularly on weekend trips to Florida. DeVinney, now a real-estate agent, did not return respond to USAE's message.

Miller opens the piece at the end of their relationship, quoting Del Brocco in the quarrel, which ultimately ended their affair. Miller said Del Brocco told friends DeVinney had been ungrateful and planned to cut the younger man out

of both his company and his \$6 million will just days before his death. Larraz said he was unsure how Miller received the dialogue from Del Brocco and DeVinney's possible relationship-ending verbal altercation.

Transitioning to Del Brocco's murder, Miller wrote, "For three years, DeVinney would be the main suspect in Del Brocco's murder." He described the interaction between the Broward Sheriff's Office and DeVinney, who was interviewed in Alexandria, Va., and the connection they made when they saw how Del Brocco's estate would be dispersed and that DeVinney was set to inherit more than \$3 million. Miller said that initially DeVinney,

a graduate of Northeastern University, insisted there was nothing romantic about their relationship and that he had an alibi, which stood up.

Homicide Detective John Curcio confirmed to USAE that DeVinney had been spoken to, but "he was ruled out as a potential suspect early on in the investigation." Curcio said he would reserve his opinion on the New Times story.

Larraz said nobody, not even himself, is sure how much any of the beneficiaries of the Samuel Del Brocco Trust will receive, because its work distributing the estate continues. Questions surrounding PCI Communications, its offices, and other assets remain, so no conclusive value of

Del Brocco's assets can be established. Larraz said they are nowhere close to being finished.

A Washington Post story dated Sept. 19, 2012 and written by Tom Jackman to which Larraz directed USAE said Del Brocco left 50% of his estate to DeVinney, 25% to Larraz, 20% in a trust for longtime partner Jan Shafer, and 5% to longtime Florida friend Greg Czarniecki. Del Brocco's will also said Shafer had eight months to remain in their Alexandria home.

Fairfax County, Va., documents show that from Sept. 28, 2012-Aug. 7, 2013 the trust distributed \$1,080,012 to unnamed beneficiaries.

Atlantic City's Trump Plaza Prepares to Close Doors

Revel, Showboat Also Ready to Close

By Mike Santa Rita

In a town already reeling from hard times and the potential closure of the Showboat Atlantic City Hotel and Casino and the Revel Casino Hotel, another iconic property is preparing to close its doors.

"WARN notices were sent to the employees of Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino July 14 to advise them the management and Board of Directors of Trump Plaza Associates, LLC and its parent company, Trump Entertainment Resorts, Inc., have been reviewing alternatives for the property," a statement from Trump Entertainment Resorts read. "Although this review has not been completed and no final decision has been made, the

company expects that it will terminate the operations of Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino on or shortly after September 16, 2014."

That makes two owners of casinos in Atlantic City preparing to close, as the Showboat owned by Caesar's Entertainment will likely close by September. Revel could do likewise if a buyer is not found at a bankruptcy court auction next month. That could put nearly 8,000 workers out on the streets.

Jim Wood, President & CEO of Meet AC, told USAE the hotel will likely be reinvented as a meeting and convention hotel without the gaming component. The public panic was overblown, Wood said. "They have to notify the union proper-

ty every time they may have to sell the hotel," he said. "The news hits that they looking to close or sell. Both scenarios are in play."

Gaming is making less money in casinos these days, Wood said, and the opportunities for meetings and conventions are there.

"There's less money being made on the casino floors," he said. "Gaming is falling short due to other locations. The city needs to diversify and allow for convention business."

Jeff Giaraci, Chief Strategy Officer for the Atlantic City Alliance, agreed with Wood.

"It's a part of the repositioning of Atlantic City," said Giaraci. "Some of our smaller properties can't compete against the national expansion of gaming."

Ben Begleiter, a spokesman for Unite Here, the hotel employees union, told USAE that support for keeping the hotel open from state delegates on both sides of the aisle had been unanimous. A 400-person march for the Showboat carrying a petition to owner Caesar's offices down the boardwalk had happened on July 9.

If the Showboat and Trump Plaza properties close, union officials will help unemployed workers file for unemployment benefits as well as look for other jobs—although those may be in scant supply in Atlantic City, Begleiter said.

Begleiter declined to comment on further union strategies, but the Associated Press reported that union officials are openly looking for buyers for the casinos at flexible worker rates.



Visit Oakland accepted the "Oakland on the Map" award at the Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce's 109th annual luncheon at the Oakland Marriott City Center. The award is given to individuals and organizations whose contributions have had a positive impact on the city's public image and perception. Shown here (left to right) are Visit Oakland staff members: Brandi Hardy, Paul Lim, Kim Bardakian, Natalie Alvarez, Allison Best, Lindsay Wright, Stephanie Nash, Eric Jue, and Kenneth Brown. Courtesy: Photographers@Large.

Atlantic City

Continued from page 1

one of only two U.S. jurisdictions with legalized casino gaming, along with Las Vegas. Now, the destination faces stiff competition from many new casinos that have opened in other northeastern states: New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Connecticut. Massachusetts is in the process of awarding licenses.

"Fortunately, this trend of increased supply and competition isn't a surprise to Atlantic City," Guardian said. "We're making significant progress in our transition to a destination that relies less on casino gambling and more on a comprehensive mix of attractions to draw tourists to the Jersey Shore."

Four of the city's 12 casinos have announced plans this year to shut down if they fail to find buyers: Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino, The Atlantic Club, Showboat, and Revel. Union leaders say more than 8,000 jobs could be lost.

John Palmieri, Executive Director of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, noted that Atlantic City's dining, entertainment, and retail sectors are growing, the Press of Atlantic City wrote. Non-gambling revenues in the city have increased more than \$160 million in the last two years and are approaching \$1 billion annually, he said.

"This evolution away from [being a] gaming-dominant destination isn't without precedent," said Guardian. "Las Vegas had to alter its revenue model over the past 15 years and we're in the process of doing the same thing."

HOTS

There's a new king in town. Virginian Jeremiah Heaton has claimed Bir Tawil, a small, unclaimed mountainous area between Egypt and Sudan as his own. Speaking with the Bristol Herald Courier, Heaton said he claimed the area so his seven-year-old daughter, Emily, could be a princess, and named his nation the Kingdom of North Sudan.

Heaton recently went to Bir Tawil and planted a flag designed by his children, the AP said. He hopes his kingdom will be recognized by its neighbors.

A bit of advice: HOTS suggests Heaton opens a North Sudan CVB immediately.

Wayne Ronayne's time as Mayor of Gosport, Scotland was a brief 40 days. But he certainly left his mark. Ronayne, 54, decided to resign recently after he

and his partner, Paula Carter, were banned from 36 area pubs by the Gosport's Pub Watch.

Express reports the drunken duo ended up being banned by the publication after Carter threatened to get a pub shut down following an argument which led to her being escorted out. The newspaper believes Ronayne is the first mayor to step down in the city's history.

Watch Chairman Phil Cox said: "Everybody is treated the same. People need to be treating licensees and staff with respect. But we don't expect the mayor of Gosport, who represents our town, to be involved in incidents like this."

HOTS has heard Ronayne is a front-runner in both the Washington, D.C. and Toronto mayoral races.



IMN Solutions held its annual Wolf Trap client event on July 8. Pictured here (left to right): Brian Knapp, President, IMN Solutions, Beth Hartgen, Executive Director, Council of Manufacturing Associations (CMA) and Bill Hudson, COO, IMN Solutions. Credit: Chuck Fazio

Brand USA Renewal Legislation Passes Committee

By Todd McElwee

The House Energy and Commerce Committee passed the Travel Promotion, Enhancement, and Modernization Act on July 15 by unanimous voice vote, which reauthorizes funding for Brand USA.

Christopher Thompson, Brand USA President & CEO, told USAE the committee's unanimous passage exceeded all expectations. The bipartisan support is a true testament to his organization's documented successes and potential, he added.

Co-sponsored in the House of Representatives by Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.), the bill was introduced on April 10. A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.).

Thompson wasn't certain when a full House vote would occur, but he said unanimous committee votes often speed up the legislative process.

"Passage of H.R. 4450 will be good for the economy," said Bilirakis. "It's a jobs bill."

Since its introduction, the travel industry has championed the bill. U.S. Travel Association, American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), and American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) are a few of the organizations supporting the measure.

On July 9, U.S. Travel released "Brand USA: Working for All of Us," highlighting the initiative's positive impact. The research showed more than 1.1 million additional visitors came to the U.S. in 2013 thanks to Brand USA, resulting in billions in additional visitor spending.

thousands of new U.S. jobs, and nearly \$1 billion in federal, local, and state tax revenue.

"America's travel community is grateful to Congressmen Gus Bilirakis and Peter Welch for championing this vital economic measure in the House," said Roger Dow, U.S. Travel President & CEO.

Katherine Lugar, President & CEO, of AHLA, also thanked Bilirakis and committee leadership while pointing to Brand USA's success.

"When considering the benefits this program has provided by successfully attracting tourists from around the world, giving the U.S. a competitive edge, and contributing to the continued strength of our industry and the national economy without costing taxpayers a dollar, this should be an easy vote to cast," said Lugar.

Need of Convention Hotel Urgent, Oklahoma City CVB Says

By Mike Santa Rita

With the addition of limited service hotels near the Oklahoma Convention Center, some critics are saying that a new convention hotel is not necessary.

But Michael Carrier, President & CEO of the Oklahoma City CVB, does not agree.

"There are a number of limited-service hotels that have been built, with extended service downtown," Carrier told USAE.

"The only people I've heard criticizing the convention hotel [concept] are people who know nothing about the hotel industry."

The existing convention center does

a thriving national as well as local business. The National Association of Sports Commissions, The American Chamber of Commerce Executives, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors have met in Oklahoma City in recent years.

But there's need for a lot of different hotels near the building, Carrier said.

"Limited-service hotels are not what is needed to support a convention center," he noted. "The bottom line is we need a full-service hotel."

Near the convention center are 2,000 downtown hotel rooms. These include a Courtyard by Marriott, the Sheraton Oklahoma City, and the Renaissance Oklahoma City. There is also the Col-

cord, a boutique hotel housed in a 100-year-old building near the facility.

"Hoteliers are still interested; developers are still interested," Carrier said. "Developers are waiting for Request For Qualifications and Requests for Proposals. I fully anticipate that there will be interest in multiple developers."

There is already support in the city for a new convention center, which would cost in the neighborhood of \$200 million. A new convention center hotel would be built adjacent to it and may be connected through an underground tunnel or skywalk, Carrier said.

Ground would be broken on the hotel in 2016, with the convention center opening in 2018 so the two opening dates would complement each other.

Speakers Assn.

Continued from page 1

speaker's brand but did not see an overlap in their services of missions.

Many others came to Hyatt's defense, including Connie Bennett from the Huffington Post. She wrote: "Although I greatly respect the National Speakers Association and its many remarkable

members, I cannot fathom how a talented brand-name-search committee—which allegedly spent "two years" on this—could have been so in the dark about the amazing Michael Hyatt, who has branded "Platform" in a big way."

Other NSA members simply took issue with the new brand name and the process by which it came about.

Hyken and NSA's leadership went to work. They tabled the name change, convened an emergency board meet-

ing, and scrapped the rebranding. Following the reversal, Hyken also personally reached out to Hyatt and said they had a pleasant conversation.

Hyken said a committee of members is being formed to help NSA re-navigate its rebranding. No timetable for an announcement was mentioned.

Hyken also added although most of the feedback was negative, he is truly impressed with the passion and engaging spirit of NSA's membership.

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NEWS

Michelle Lintz Leaving Rapid City CVB

By Jonathan Trager

Michelle Lintz has announced her plans to retire from the Rapid City CVB, where she has served as Executive Director of the last 18 years.

Lintz's last day with the organization is on July 25. The Rapid City Chamber of Commerce has launched a nation-wide search for the next leader of the CVB.

After 28 years with the bureau, where Lintz also served as Sales Director and Assistant Director, she said "it's just time" to depart.

"I know that people have said it's better to retire a year too early than a year too late," she told USAE. "I feel like I'm going out on top and leaving a very

successful bureau."

During Lintz's tenure, funding has increased by 400% to \$2.3 million. The organization now has 10 full-time staff members compared to four when she began.

Lintz said her husband, who works as a supervisor with a contractor, will probably retire as well within a few months. The couple has one daughter in South Dakota and a daughter on each coast who they plan to visit more. Lintz and her husband live on a golf course and enjoy playing, although Lintz said her game needs improvement.

Lintz was co-founder and chair of the statewide South Dakota Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus and past

chair of Black Hills Badlands Association, Advisory board member for the Tourism and Hospitality Management Division at BHSU, and a member of the Visitor Industry Alliance.

She was the recipient of the Black Hills Advertising Association's Silver Medal Award and was awarded the top annual tourism award, the Ben Black Elk award, at the Governor's Tourism Conference for making outstanding contributions to the state's visitor industry. The CVB staff also received the Excellence in Innovation in marketing at the conference.

"We have an amazing staff of hard-working professional people," she said. "I know things will continue to work well here."



Michelle Lintz

Overtake Same-Sex Marriage Bans, Says Ft. Lauderdale CVB

By Jonathan Trager

The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB has thrown its support behind repealing a ban on same-sex marriage in Florida, which is being targeted in two separate lawsuits.

Pending before the state's Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida is a lawsuit between six same-sex couples seeking to get married v. the Clerk of the Courts

of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

A lawsuit filed by eight same-sex couples who legally married elsewhere and are seeking legal recognition is also being considered by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida.

"After years of seeking equal rights for the LGBT community in Florida, it is the right time to do the right thing and allow same-sex marriage throughout the state," said Nicki E. Grossman, President & CEO

of the CVB.

Voters passed an amendment to the state constitution in 2008 that banned same-sex marriage and civil unions, including prohibiting state recognition of same-sex marriages performed in states where the practice is legal.

The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB was the first in the country to have a dedicated department, staff, and marketing dollars to support LGBT tourism.

"We've come a long way in a short period, and we hope the state will follow our lead and welcome the LGBT community with their wish to be married and have their marriages recognized here with warm, open, and loving arms," said Richard Gray, Managing Director of the LGBT market for the Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB.

In 1996, the CVB launched its first LGBT ad campaign and became the first tourism agency with an LGBT-centric vacation planner and dedicated section on a CVB tourism website.

USAE reported last month that the CVB announced will host its first annual "Gay Days" from Nov. 25-Dec. 1. It's expected to draw 150,000 attendees.

The south Florida city currently has the greatest concentration of same-sex couples in America. A record-breaking 1.3 million LGBT people visited the destination in 2013, according to the bureau.

"The rainbow flag flies loud and proud in Broward County, and we can't wait to celebrate the legalization of same-sex marriage with couples from all walks of life and from all over the country," said Grossman.

Fort Worth Council Okays New Arena and Sports Facility

By Jonathan Trager

The Fort Worth City Council has unanimously decided to pursue a new 14,000-seat multipurpose arena and sports facility.

The council vote was 9-0. Fort Worth voters still have to approve the project in a referendum.

Among events the proposed arena would host are concerts, family shows, sporting events, rodeos, and other agricultural and equestrian shows.

Located on the southern side of the Will Rogers Memorial Center, the arena would be funded by an even split of private money and public dollars, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported.

Consultant Rob Hunden of Chicago-based Hunden Strategic Partners issued a report in June. The document recommends tearing down the 10,000-seat arena at the Fort Worth Convention

Center, which is more than 40 years old.

"The Hunden & Associates report tells us that meeting planners love the downtown Fort Worth experience," Mitch Whitten, Vice President of Marketing & Communications for the Fort Worth CVB, told USAE. "There is demand that we cannot accommodate. In the years ahead we need to grow to meet demand. The Fort Worth City Council has taken the first step toward expanding our meeting and convention package and enhancing our entertainment districts."

Hunden said cost estimates and design ideas for the project could be ready by this fall, according to the Star-Telegram. The report recommends the work be completed by 2020.

Before residents can vote on the project, the city must send a copy of the resolution to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Airlines for America Welcomes CBP Preclearance Oversight Legislation

By Todd McElwee

The Preclearance Authorization Act of 2014 sets prerequisites for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) before establishing new preclearance facilities, which Airlines for America (A4A) says would help level the playing field for domestic carriers.

Introduced by Rep. Pat Meahan (R-Penn.) on Nov. 14, 2013, the bill was passed by voice vote on July 8. On July 9, it was referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The bill requires CBP to adhere to a series of requirements before establishing preclearance facilities at new locations. Congress, gov says the Sec. of Homeland Security must notify Congress and the General Accountability Office (GAO) of the intent to establish a preclearance facility, conduct preclearance operations, or provide customs services outside of the nation no later than 180 days prior to entering into an agreement.

A4A endorses the requirement that new locations must be served by a U.S. carrier, with CBP required to consult with stakeholders, including airlines, prior to entering into an agreement with a foreign government.

The airline association also pointed to the "Fix It Here First" plan, which requires CBP to address facilitation issues at domestic facilities where customs wait times exceed those at similar facilities in foreign nations. CBP must also consider and report on the economic, competitive, and employment impacts of new locations.

"Today's vote is an important win for the traveling public, ensuring that we focus on fixing lengthy customs lines at U.S. gateways first, before building and staffing additional preclearance facilities overseas," said A4A President & CEO Nicholas E. Calio.

Last year, A4A was joined in the fight against a proposed preclearance facility at Abu Dhabi International Airport by Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), Airports Council International - North America (ACI-NA), Consumer Travel Alliance, Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), and the Regional Airline Association (RAA) in the "Draw the Line Here" campaign.

Among the associations' concerns were that a foreign government was paying for security functions at a customs facility and that no U.S. carrier served the airport, as well as the precedent the proposed site could establish. The facility opened in late January.



Minneapolis hosted the Major League Baseball All-Star Game at Target Field on July 15. Pictured here (left to right): Brett Diamond, Sr. Manager, National Football League; Brent Forster, Sr. Vice President of Destination Sales, Meet Minneapolis; Melvin Tennant, President & CEO, Meet Minneapolis; Dave St. Peter, President, Minnesota Twins; and John Luke, General Manager, Hilton Minneapolis. The American League beat the National League 5-3.

NEWS

30 Under 30

Continued from page 1

A total of 70 applications poured in from young CVB professionals across the United States before the April 11 deadline. Each application consisted of basic professional information and a

short-answer YouTube video submission, accompanied by the signature and approval of the applicant's CEO.

"USAE couldn't be more impressed with the quality of this year's 30 Under 30 honorees," said Anne Daly Heller, Executive Editor & Publisher. "If this class is an indication of the kind of young men and

women who are choosing to pursue careers in the field of destination marketing today, then the outlook for this industry is very bright, indeed."

Mike Gamble, President & CEO of Searchwide, expressed a similar sentiment.

"I was very impressed with all of the

submissions this year, and making the final selections was very difficult," Gamble said. "It is safe to say that the future of destination marketing is in good hands with this group of young professionals."

Congratulations to this year's class of 30 Under 30 honorees, and may their careers be long and prosperous!

2014 DMAI 30 Under 30 Honorees

Katie Bishop, Executive Director, Dunwoody (Ga.) CVB



Katie Bishop, 29, attended the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Public Relations. About her spare time, she says, "Truly, my life is my job. My volunteer activities, social groups, and after-work functions typically all relate back to my role at the CVB in some form." She does find time to travel though, and she is currently planning a 30th birthday trip to Sonoma.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Bishop: I feel incredibly honored to be among this group of young leaders that encompasses so much diverse talent and experience. I've always felt blessed to have a career that's more than just a job, and it's inspiring to be among 29 other young people who share that same passion for the industry.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Bishop: Like any job, there are many challenging aspects. The most challenging part to me is managing expectations for myself, our team, and the stakeholders. We are all visionary people and want to see results immediately, and as Director it's important for me to help maintain an understanding of benchmarks that will eventually amount to achieving our goals.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Bishop: I was initially very hesitant about making the video, but going through the process made me reflect upon the past five years and see that the day-to-day has amounted to some pretty cool results. It's hard to see the impact of your efforts from one day to the next, but it's a great feeling to look back as a whole and see what has been accomplished.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Bishop: My biggest mentor has always been my father. Though there are others I go to for specific counsel as it relates to the industry, my father has always been the person I most admire and from whom I have received the greatest advice and direction. Growing up, I was inspired by his work ethic and drive, and now as an adult we share a passion for business and leadership. Along the way, he has

offered encouragement or advice, and he is always willing to lend an ear when I just need to talk through something.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Bishop: It's no secret to us that we have the best jobs in our communities, but many don't understand our role or function. In general, a CVB is the community's marketing arm for the purpose of generating economic development. But more specifically, we are here to support the efforts of local businesses and attractions, be champions for the community, and serve as a trusted resource for residents and businesses. At the end of the day, we are people who are extremely passionate about the success and vitality of our communities and want to see them thrive as destinations.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Bishop: After college, I was living in a small town in South Georgia and was offered the job of Tourism Coordinator. I initially saw it as a small community job, and I loved being a part of the historic town. I began to learn more about tourism, and my passion for the industry grew as I realized the impact of my job extended beyond Main Street. Though I am no longer in that same small town, it will always hold a special place in my heart as my first community. Destination marketing isn't just a job. It's a way of life, as you become one and the same as your community.

Leroy Bridges, Digital Media & Content Generation Specialist, St. Pete/Clearwater Area CVB



A self-described "huge sports guy," Leroy Bridges has been with the St. Pete/Clearwater Area CVB for two years. The 28-year-old says he has developed a passion for photography recently, with the around-the-clock accessibility of his iPhone helping to fuel the fire.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Bridges: I'm humbled DMAI is investing in me and honored to be a part of an incredibly talented group of people. The

distinction stokes my passion for tourism marketing even more.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Bridges: Our Deputy Director, David Downing. He's given me the freedom and encouragement to create exciting content and grow our social media channels, while giving me insight into the host of different marketing, management, and decision-making scenarios he's faced in his successful career.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Bridges: An organization that's tasked with bringing every partner's singular goals into one package and helping everyone see the destination as a whole—not just one hotel, beach, restaurant, or attraction.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Bridges: My writing background led me to Visit St. Pete/Clearwater, but a desire to be closer to friends and in a warmer climate also led me there. I'm incredibly lucky to have settled into a thriving organization and never would have expected it.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Bridges: Juggling the many different aspects of my position can be a challenge. I manage all of our social media channels and create content, but I also work with our four PR firms from around the world coordinating our efforts. At any one time, there are a dozen different projects in the mix.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Bridges: I'm always trying to create the next experiential video hit for our YouTube channel, so I went through the same process I do regularly for that. Ultimately, I wanted to provide the judges and others a more exciting video entry that focused on our incredible destination and how I'm trying to market that in ways others might not be.

Mary Brooks, Assistant Marketing Manager, Greater Raleigh CVB



Mary Brooks, 24, arrived at the Greater Raleigh CVB nearly two years ago. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling, DIY projects, food truck hunting, craft

beer tasting, and cheering on the North Carolina State Wolfpack and Carolina Hurricanes.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Brooks: I feel honored and full of opportunity. This program appears to offer its participants the opportunity to dive even further into the DMO industry and learn more of its complexities.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Brooks: A big part of my position at the GRCVB is partner relations. While many of our new partners are enthusiastic to work with us and open to jump onboard with new ideas and campaigns, others can be hesitant. I have found the importance of educating our partners on what a CVB is, what we do as well as stressing the bottom-line benefits of working with us. I have also found value in zooming-in on what each unique partner is looking for in its relationship with the CVB and strategizing the best partnership opportunities for them to get involved with and the best ways to encourage their involvement in those opportunities.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Brooks: Fun! My favorite part of being a marketing professional is the freedom to be creative, and I felt making this video allowed me to do just that. The video was filmed on my point-and-shoot camera around some of my favorite spots around Raleigh that are also great attractions for visitors. What isn't so fun is not being able to control the weather—spring showers and pollen season don't always make for the prettiest of days and voices.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Brooks: While local economic development may always be our bottom line, I believe our role in the community is to act as a liaison between our destination's potential visitors and the businesses they encounter while in the area. To do this we must have strong connections with our community partners and be able to anticipate the wants and needs of our visitors. Our branding must be top of mind for visitors, and we should be specialists for visitor information.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Brooks: Upon graduation from college, a family member suggested I look into working at the local CVB. With a degree in Business Administration concentrating in marketing and being a lover of travel, it was an industry I started to explore and that sparked my interest. Lucky for me, my position at the GRCVB combines many of my biggest passions: travel, marketing, and Raleigh. There wasn't a better time for me to join the CVB as the area is booming and becoming a major player in the convention, sports, and leisure travel scene, and I am proud to play a part in that.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Brooks: I feel fortunate to be part of an

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office where there is an open-door policy and in which I am able to know each of my co-workers. With a diverse group of employees from a variety of backgrounds, there is always someone specialized in a certain area who is more than willing to lend advice or encouragement. I think this is something that cannot be found in many organizations, and it's something I am grateful for within my own office.

*Erin Brousseau,
Sales & Services Coordinator,
Providence Warwick CVB*



Erin Brousseau is 25 years old and attended Johnson & Wales in Providence, R.I. In her spare time, she en-

joys hanging out with friends, exploring new places, and shopping.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Brousseau: I have known for a while that I wanted to work in the hospitality industry. During my time at Johnson and Wales, I had the opportunity to intern at the CVB. That not only made me realize that this is the industry I wanted to be in, but it also made me realize that working at the CVB was a fun and challenging way to be a part of it and that intrigued me.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Brousseau: I feel extremely privileged to be a part of the 30 Under 30 class of 2014. I was honored just to be nominated, but to have actually been chosen is truly an amazing feeling.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Brousseau: I really enjoyed making the video! I had never been in front of the camera and therefore, found it very interesting to watch myself. I learned about my mannerisms that I really had never noticed, as well as focusing on slowing down my speech—since I'm from New England. We all talk fast!

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Brousseau: I consider the most challenging part of my job also the most exciting and interesting. In the meetings and convention industry, there are so many different personalities that you come into contact with on a daily basis. Working with all these different personalities can be challenging at first, but I see each one as a learning experience

as well. The tourism and hospitality industry has a much wider reach than I could have ever imagined, and only I discovered that once I started working within it.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Brousseau: Providence Warwick CVB President and CEO Martha Sheridan has been my biggest mentor. Ever since I interned at the CVB, Martha has guided me and provided opportunities to learn and grow in my career. She not only has been my biggest mentor, but she has also been my role model because she has worked in this industry for many years and has held various positions. She is a great resource and knows so much about hospitality and tourism.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Brousseau: I think destination-marketing organizations are an extremely important part of a community. It's important because as a CVB we don't work for a particular company but for the destination as a whole. We work for the location and to drive people to our city. Our goal is to make a positive impact on the entire community. Our decisions and goals are based on what the best outcome, and greatest economic impact, for our destination and everyone within it.

*Schuyler Bull, Marketing Manager,
Albany County CVB*



Schuyler D. Bull teaches an evening business class at his alma mater, The College of Saint Rose. The 25-year-old has been with the CVB for three years and spends his weekends on home improvement activities. He recently got into running.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Bull: I am extremely honored and humbled to be one of the 30 Under 30 honorees. This is an excellent opportunity to meet the leaders of our industry, absorb important information that will enable me to perform better, and establish relationships with others who face the same challenges each day in our respective positions in the DMO community.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

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AMANDA DIANE ECKELBARGER

Publications / Graphic Designer
Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau / Elkhart, Indiana

Focused. Forward Thinking. Fantastic.

Congratulations Amanda

We are proud of your accomplishments and appreciate your dedication and contributions to tourism promotion development and destination project management. Congratulations on being among the 2014 "30 Under 30" honorees.

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Bull: I'm fortunate to have so many supportive and caring people in my life, many of which I consider my mentors. My parents taught me to work hard, my boss has provided me so many incredible opportunities, and professional contacts and friends have always been there to offer guidance and support. One person, in particular, has gone above and beyond though: Mike D'Attilio, an administrator at the college I attended, taught me to live a life of PIE: being Positive, Involved, and Enthusiastic. In embodying this concept, Mike has been so generous of his time and energy to make an impact on so many lives both personally and professionally, including my own.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Bull: As a marketer, I am always trying to find new ways to reach our target audience. In today's landscape, there are new and exciting means of doing that every day; the traditional model has been shattered. The most challenging aspect of my job is to not get caught up in the hype, but identify the right channel and focus our resources on producing a quality outcome. I always tell my team if we're going to start something new, we're going to do it right the first time and every time.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Bull: I had a blast making the video! Once I became comfortable in front of the camera, showcasing Albany as a beautiful and exciting destination was simple. Albany has such an amazing story, so cutting down all of the great material [to under four minutes] did prove difficult.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Bull: CVBs play an important, yet sometimes behind-the-scenes, role in a community. In addition to reaching potential meeting planners and visitors, I believe the CVB should also be educating the residents of the community in which they operate so that they are empowered to become ambassadors for the destination, spreading the word about our offerings and a general sense of hospitality to visitors.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Bull: I moved to Albany to attend college and soon fell in love with the area after learning about its history and enjoying all of the things there are to do. After spending a year in public relations, the opportunity to work at the CVB was one that I could not pass up. Thankfully, my boss took a chance on hiring such a young professional—I was only 22 at the time. Since then, I feel I have adopted our mission and incorporate it into my everyday life, recommending activities to my friends and encouraging everyone I meet to explore our beautiful destination.

Kimberly Corbets,
Convention Sales Manager,
Greater Miami CVB



Kimberly Corbets, 29, grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and graduated from Notre Dame College, where she played varsity

softball and soccer. Most of her family still lives in Cleveland, however, being one of six children, a few have spread out. She still plays softball and soccer. She is also a member of the Junior League of Miami, a volunteer organization that works primarily to improve the lives of women and children in the community.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Corbets: I felt extremely lucky and honored to just be nominated for DMAI's 30 Under 30 by my bosses and our President Bill Talbert; especially since I have been with the GMCVB for less than a year. I'm absolutely thrilled to have such a prestigious honor awarded to me by DMAI. This award is by far the best recognition I've received in my professional career, and I feel blessed to be recognized by such a great organization and to be amongst such a talented group of young professionals in the industry.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Corbets: The most challenging part of

my job is educating my clients on what exactly CVBs do and how we can assist them in planning and executing their meetings. When I first started, I was shocked at how many seasoned meeting planners did not understand what CVBs do and had consequently never used a CVB when planning a meeting in another city. I spend a lot of time educating meeting planners on the value and time savings that we can provide for them at no cost. Many people believe that nothing is free. As a result, it is often difficult to help meeting planners understand that we do provide our services at no cost. Similarly, it can be challenging to make them realize the value and benefits of working with us.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Corbets: The experience of making the video was an interesting one. I haven't had to make a video presentation since high school, and I was definitely nervous. There was a lot I wanted to say about Miami and to fit it all into a four-minute

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Congratulations to our good friend and colleague

Kristin Wing

DMAI's 30 Under 30 Participant.

Anaheim/Orange County Visitor & Convention Bureau is proud to congratulate an extraordinary team player as unique and adventurous as the destination she passionately represents.

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video was a challenge. I knew I had to make Miami and my video stand out because I knew there would be a lot of great destinations and talented nominees competing. Thus, it was nerve wracking when trying to choose what content to include. All in all, the shoot went well, and I think I was able to highlight many of the unique characteristics that make Miami so fantastic.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Corbets: My biggest mentor has been my boss, Ita Moriarty, Senior Vice President of Convention Sales. She has been with the Miami CVB for more than 26 years and has been a great leader and mentor to me. She has provided me with excellent support, training, and guidance

throughout my time at the bureau, and I really look up to her as a strong female leader in our community and within our industry. Our team is very fortunate to have such a supportive and knowledgeable leader and role model.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Corbets: The role of a CVB in the community is a very important one. CVBs are the face of the city and are responsible for keeping their destinations relevant and visible within a very competitive global market. They are also important to the local community and their members because they can provide great exposure for local businesses. This exposure to tourists, visitors, and even other locals drives revenues to their businesses. They also play a major part in the development and success of a destination by keeping tourists, investors, and other major parties

interested in the destination.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Corbets: I got into destination marketing after being involved in hospitality on the hotel side. I began my career in hospitality with Hilton Worldwide Sales in Chicago. My next step with Hilton was to get on-property experience and when the opportunity presented itself to come to a great destination such as Miami, I jumped on it. As much as I enjoyed my time on-property, I wanted something that had a larger long term vision and was more "big picture," so to speak. I thought about staying with Hilton and pursuing a position with national sales, but when the CVB opportunity came along, I knew that's where I wanted to be. This was an opportunity to sell the greatest destination in the world and sell across all hospitality brands. I absolutely love it!

*Amanda Eckelbarger,
Publications/Graphic Designer,
Elkhart County (Ind.) CVB*



Amanda Eckelbarger, now 30, started working part-time at the Elkhart County, CVB when she was in high school and continued through college. Overall, she's been with the CVB 14 years—7 of those have been as a full-time staff member. She has been married to her husband, Blake, since 2007. A graduate of Indiana University—South Bend with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing, Eckelbarger loves to travel, have new experiences, and enjoys walking, biking, hiking, and boating.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Eckelbarger: I'm excited and greatly honored to be selected as part of this incredible class. I'm really looking forward to meeting the other winners and joining them at annual convention to take part in the professional development opportunities offered.

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

Eckelbarger: Because my primary role at the CVB is Graphic Designer, the most challenging part is meeting deadlines that seem to get tighter and tighter while keeping the creative fresh. Our CVB does everything in-house (ads, rack cards, presentations, banners, fulfilling photo requests from journalists, etc.), which means at some point it all comes across my desk.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Eckelbarger: It was fun to sit back and think about some of the achievements I've accomplished along with our CVB team. It made me realize that it's important to occasionally reflect on what we've achieved. Sometimes we get so busy with all of the projects we're involved with that we don't take time to do that.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Eckelbarger: I can't narrow it down to just one person. Since starting at the Elkhart County CVB, I've been incredibly fortunate to work with an amazing team. Each person really has had a large part in helping me grow in this industry.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Eckelbarger: A CVB's role in each community is different. The Elkhart County CVB is committed to place-based tourism initiatives that contribute to helping communities enhance and preserve their quality of life. CVB staff is expected to be engaged and active in organizations, projects, and activities that benefit our communities. Our CVB is involved in projects that promote the expansion of existing

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*The Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau
congratulates*

Cat Kessler

on her selection as one of DMAI's 30 Under 30.



*As a rising star in tourism, Cat makes magic online
for the Asheville CVB every day on ExploreAsheville.com
and our Visit Asheville social channels.*

ASHEVILLE
any way you like it.

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and creation of new facilities and events, including the continued development of downtowns for arts, culture, entertainment, and entrepreneurship. It's integrated into the community through advocacy initiatives and it fosters partnerships with local government, non-profit organizations, small businesses, and residents.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Eckelbarger: I somewhat stumbled into a job in destination marketing when I started working part-time in high school as a Visitor Center attendant. As time went on, I became more involved with day-to-day operations and was asked to help on some CVB projects. That really sparked my interest. I thought, "Wow—I can really help shape the experience a person has in a community that I love!" I've never looked back, and I feel lucky to work in an industry I'm passionate about.

Jessica Frederickson, Tourism Communications Manager, Visit Salt Lake



Jessica Frederickson was born and raised in Salt Lake City and tries to take advantage of everything the city has to offer, whether it be a mountain bike ride on her lunch break, hikes after work, or checking out every special event on the weekends. She is currently enrolled in a Master's Program for Organizational Leadership and hopes she can apply what she learns to destination-marketing organizations.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Frederickson: I am grateful for my superiors who felt I would be a good fit to apply for 30 under 30. It's an honor to represent Salt Lake.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Frederickson: The best and most challenging part of my job are the stereotypes surrounding my destination. On the one hand, it's a great feeling when I can share the greatness of my city, but sometimes it takes time to get people to give it a chance.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Frederickson: My roll requires I make video blogs regularly, but this was a little different. I was the main focus and subject of the video, and I hated it. It was even worse when I had to edit the video, watching myself over and over again for a couple of hours. Glad it's over!

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Frederickson: CVBs are definitely the messengers for a community. The stories each destination has are organic, and CVBs get to share that with conventions, visitors, and media. CVBs give a voice to destinations that otherwise might not be heard.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Frederickson: Shawn Stinson, my Director, was been my mentor for the past two years. Not only is he great at his job, but he has taught me the importance of work/life balance and how to share my passions with my job.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Frederickson: It was really serendipitous. I was looking for an internship in college for my major in Public Relations. A friend of a friend worked for a local ski organization and mentioned an available internship. As soon as I learned you could work and ski, I was sold.

Joe Giessler, Multimedia Marketing Coordinator, Tourism Ohio



Joe Giessler, 28, graduated from the University of Dayton. In his free time, he is the Executive Director of a non-profit in Columbus that coordinates community volunteer opportunities for young profes-

sionals within the city. "I believe strongly in volunteerism and want to help others find ways to give back to the community in which they live," Giessler told USAE.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Giessler: It is such an honor to be recognized! It was a complete surprise to be selected for the program. There are so many amazing tourism professionals in the country, and it is a true honor to be included among such an elite group.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Giessler: I really enjoyed this process. I'm naturally a very humble person, so I often find it difficult to really "brag" about my accomplishments and successes. However, the entire team at Tourism Ohio is the reason I was given this recognition, so it's a lot easier to brag about how awesome they are!

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Giessler: CVBs play a huge role in not only communicating the wonderful

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As a distinguished member of Destination Marketing Association International's "30 Under 30" program, Jeri's colleagues at Positively Cleveland proudly celebrate her notable achievements as a leader in our organization and industry.



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attractions of a community to incoming visitors, but to the community itself. The value of creating ambassadors in your own community cannot be overstated.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Glessler: My biggest mentor to date has been Amir Eylon, who now works at Brand USA, but originally hired me onto his team at Tourism Ohio. He put faith in me that I could help lead the messaging of Tourism Ohio and has always been a fantastic sounding board about my job and long term career growth. I owe him a lot!

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Glessler: After spending a few years as a newspaper reporter, I was looking for a new opportunity, and I am thrilled beyond belief I landed in tourism. I absolutely love that all of my work is geared toward helping friends and family create happy memories that they will remember for years.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Glessler: The most challenging aspect is something that faces all of us in the digital space, which is riding the wave of constant change and finding a way to maximize the reach to your audience based on the latest and greatest variation of Facebook, Instagram, etc. Though it is a challenge, it is truly exciting to fight to be on the forefront of the latest changes in the digital space.

*Brandon Hall,
Global Sales Specialist,
Discover The Palm Beaches*



Brandon Hall, 24, is one of the youngest award winners, having been in the industry for just a year-and-a-half. The graduate of Florida Atlantic University double-majored in Hospitality Management and Marketing Management. Outside of work, he enjoys running and has recently taken on an ambitious goal "to run more miles in a month than there are days." He also enjoys playing kickball.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Hall: I got into the industry by accepting an internship with Discover Palm Beach County in January 2013. A few months later I became the first-ever intern hired into a full-time position. Since freshman year in high school, I wanted to find a career where I could combine my passions of marketing and travel.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Hall: Being selected to join the 2014

class is a tremendous honor. Coming out of college last spring, I never dreamed of having an opportunity like this so early on. I am truly excited to further my learning of the industry and to ultimately contribute to Palm Beach County and DMAI's growth.

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

Hall: Adapting to the rapid changes in the industry is one of the most challenging aspects of the job, but also one of the most enjoyable. Not only are hoteliers always on the move, but also new trends to promote a destination come and go.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Hall: My current boss, Doug McLain, has been my biggest mentor. I first met him while I was in college when I had to interview a meetings and events professional. During this face-to-face meeting, he conveyed to me to never get discouraged and to work as hard as I can to get in to the competitive DMO world. Little did I know, a year later I would become an intern in his department. Since that interview, he has believed in me and I know he will continue to support my career in whatever way possible.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Hall: Creating my video was a great collaboration between our marketing department and me. I came up with what to include and wrote the script, but our Graphic & Video Production Manager put everything together. I cannot thank him enough for all of his hard work.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Hall: Convention and visitor's bureaus are charged with promotion and marketing of a given state, city, region, or county. These objectives are achieved through public relations, advertising, attending

various trade shows, familiarization trips, and sales missions. In Palm Beach County, tourism brings in more than \$6 billion to our local economy and every 100 visitors create 1 job. Our efforts are in conjunction with local hotel, restaurant, and attraction partners who assist in our various activities and help make The Palm Beaches the "Best Way to Experience Florida."

*Daniel Horsch, Interactive
Marketing Coordinator,
Visit Lubbock*



Daniel Horsch, 28, has been with Visit Lubbock for two years. A broadcast journalism major and graduate of Texas Tech University, Horsch says he's "married to tourism." Although he takes a lot of photographs for work, he still really enjoys "having a few hours to myself to just go out with my camera and go shutter happy."

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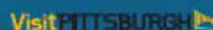
CONGRATULATIONS to our FANTASTIC DMAI 30 Under 30 EMPLOYEES!



MARY E. BROOKS
Assistant Marketing Manager



ASHLEE STECKEL
Advertising Sales Director



ERIN BROUSSEAU
Small Meeting Sales & Services
Manager



JESSICA FREDRICKSON
Tourism Communications Manager



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USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Horsch: It's an awesome feeling to even be considered for this award. Winning the award validates the work that I've done since jumping on the travel and tourism ship in 2010.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Horsch: Making the video was a lot of fun! I produce similar videos for a monthly project, so it was cool to actually get in front of the camera. I must say that after looking at some other videos, I would have loved to step out of the office and shared more of my city to help tell my story. I'm a part of a really creative group of people!

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Horsch: It comes down to education. Our role at the CVB is based upon how many people we can educate about what we do and how we can assist them. Whether it's convention sales, tourism, or sporting events, our marketing is built to educate the consumer. Bring them to town and show them why they need to come back.

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

Horsch: I would say it's the constant juggling of projects. I work for a fast-paced in-house marketing team that focuses on not only tourism, but sports and economic development as well. We all thrive in this environment. The challenge is giving each project 110% while managing day-to-day tasks. E-mails are the biggest time-vampires

known to man!

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Horsch: My father has always been my biggest mentor. Some may have a mentor in the industry, but hard work and dedication are universal traits no matter where you work. He is an educator and has worked for the same school for close to 25 years! His role as a physical education teacher and a coach gives him the unique ability to always keep things fresh. I try to use the same concept in what I do in my position. That, and the man has never had a bad day in his life. I try to incorporate his work ethic, energy, and will to succeed into my role every time I walk into the office.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Horsch: A little bit of luck and a lot of networking! I was working as a part-time journalist for a struggling news station in El Paso when I met a friend who was working at Visit El Paso at the time. After evaluating their marketing efforts, I found that they lacked a social media presence. I presented my case to him in hopes of maybe landing a part-time position to run their social media accounts, and I came to find out two weeks later that he was planning to leave his role. He helped me get my foot in the door, and I started working for Visit El Paso in August of 2010. I fell in love with the tourism industry the moment I sat behind my desk and haven't looked back since!

Lisa Huber, Marketing & Media Relations Manager, Visit Saint Paul



Outdoors enthusiast Lisa Huber joined Visit Saint Paul in Aug. 2011. The 28-year-old married her husband, Max, five years ago and has strong ties to the University of North Dakota. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, running, reading, traveling, cheering on her favorite sports teams, and spending time outside as much as possible during the summer months.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Huber: It is an honor to be selected to be a 30 Under 30 winner. I absolutely love what I do and look forward to going to work each day. I am inspired by the love people have for the city of Saint Paul and the reaction of new visitors to the city. Attending DMAI with 29 other 30 Under 30 honorees, as well as veterans in the industry, is going to be a great opportunity to grow professionally.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Huber: I previously worked at the University of North Dakota Athletics Department as the Assistant AD of Marketing. Our hockey team made it to the NCAA Frozen Four Championship in April of 2011 which was hosted at the Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul. During the preparations of planning the team travel and fan activities, I had the pleasure of working with Adam Johnson, Vice President of Marketing at Visit Saint Paul. He was reaching out to each school to see if they would be interested in decorating the team hotel in school décor. When my position opened at Visit Saint Paul, I reconnected with Adam and the rest is history.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Huber: There are countless opportunities out there to share the story of Saint Paul and reach potential visitors. Whether this is being more active on social media, pitching more stories to media outlets, adding more content to the website and so on, there is always more that can be done. However, the challenges lie with not having enough resources available to accomplish everything I would like to. Whether this is time, money, or additional staff members, I have to remind myself that I don't have to do everything, but just do the best with what I have.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Huber: Making the video was quite the experience. I worked closely with my coworker, Robert Ferdinandt, to put it together, which was really great because I could not have done it on

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Schuyler Bull, (nee, Charlie Bell, Stu Ball, and many others).

Yes, we know many of our clients and contacts have a difficult time with your name that's so historically grounded in our region. But we are proud of you and we know that you are proud of New York's Capital Region which you market so well. We thank you for your enthusiasm, excellent work ethic and sparkling marketing ideas.

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my own. I am not a shy person and am quite comfortable on camera, but there was something about answering questions via a video that put me a little out of my element. I laugh at myself now when I watch it because I think I could have looked happier!

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Huber: Brian Faison, Athletic Director at the University of North Dakota, has played a big role in my career and life. I was hired full time as the Marketing Director at UND at the same time he was brought on board. After spending five years moving up the ranks from an unpaid intern to a full-time position, it was exciting to start my first job after Graduate School with someone so established in the industry.

He motivated me to be the best at my job I could be by encouraging me to take chances and to see the big picture when making decisions. When I decided to move on to Visit Saint Paul and be closer to my family, he supported me and

has continued to be in my life. Ironically, college hockey is very embedded in the Twin Cities community, so we have continued to stay in touch and see each other over the years.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Huber: The role of a CVB has many facets. Whether it's telling the story of Saint Paul to visitors and locals, booking events, conferences and meetings, or finding that unique venue for a couple to get married in, it's about creating authentic experiences for each group. We want to inspire people to travel and spend time in Saint Paul that ultimately creates unforgettable memories. It's also important we stay engaged in our community and a part of the conversation about its growth and development. The potential of each city is endless.

*Elizabeth Huston,
Sales Manager, Visit Indy*



Elizabeth Huston, 29, is married with a puppy named Peyton (named after Peyton Manning, at the time, quarterback of the Indianapolis Colts). A Sports Marketing and Management major and graduate of Indiana University, Huston has been with Visit Indy for four-and-a-half years. She enjoys reading, running, spending

time with friends, seeing concerts, and playing cards—euchre, gin rummy, and canasta are her favorites.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Huston: Being part of DMAI's 30 Under 30 2014 class is such an incredible honor. Being able to represent Indianapolis with a select group of my peers is very exciting.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Huston: I'm very fortunate to have more than one mentor in my life. I have a group of a few amazing ladies (Lisa Fry, Director, Incentive Accounts at Omni Global; Alexis Schwartz, Business Development Manager Chegg; Wendy Petersen, National Sales Manager at Visit Indy) that have helped guide me not only through the hospitality industry alone but also through the experience of working in business as a woman. As a young professional, I feel it's essential to have a network of mentors. Each mentor brings a different and creative way of looking at a problem or future goal of mine, whether it's regarding professional or personal life. **USAE:** What's the most challenging part of your job?

Huston: I find the most challenging part of my job is that my market is like a big jigsaw puzzle. Finding the perfect pattern, availability, and space flow at either the hotel or center can be a repetitive attempt to try new ways of making the same "piece" work. My goal is to find the perfect option for my customer that will meet their event needs and really let their program shine in their attendee's eyes. But at times, it can take several attempts for me to make the big picture come together. Though this one of the most challenging parts of my job, it is one of my favorite parts!

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Huston: Making my DMAI video was an entirely new experience for me. I've been discussing and selling the features and benefits of Indy face-to-face or over the phone for years—I like to think that I can talk to just about anyone. But having set questions and no audience to hear my message until after my recording was over was a bit nerve-racking. I wanted to be sure my story and message came across loud and clear. Though this was a new experience for me, I really enjoyed pulling my video together with Visit Indy's marketing team.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Huston: Visit Indy plays a crucial role in Indy's hospitality community, with the 74,000 people who depend on tourism for a paycheck. We are a vital support system to our hotels and partners who welcome our 26 million visitors each year providing sales, services, housing, and marketing assistance all under one roof. Indy's hospitality community is a very close-knit team that works as a unified force to meet the needs of our customers.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Huston: I started my career in hospitality working at a TownePlace Suites by Marriott during my college years. After being in operation management for six years, I realized my passion was working directly with customers to help make their plans and dreams come to fruition. I made the decision to switch to hotel sales, which was one of the best decisions I ever made. I quickly realized that my strengths and passions really helped me

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Congratulations, Jessica!

The city of Fayetteville is fortunate to have communications manager Jessica Leonard in the Visitors Bureau. We applaud her "30 Under 30" recognition from Destination Marketing Association International.

Her dedication and enthusiasm have made her one of the city's greatest ambassadors, and we're thankful for her efforts to help more and more people Experience Fayetteville.

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soar when working with clients in a sales capacity. Through my role in hotel sales, I got a better understanding of what Visit Indy did and provided for our destination. Through my continued work with Visit Indy during my role in hotel sales, I found that my interest for destination marketing increasing. I loved the idea of being able to represent more than just one hotel. Being able to present multiple options in a city, along with highlighting the benefits of what makes Indy was the perfect fit for me. I'm so fortunate that I was able to find my way to Visit Indy and learn one of my true passions.

Cat Kessler, Online Content Manager, Explore Asheville



Cat Kessler, 28, grew up in the area of Charlotte, N.C., and graduated from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2008 with a concentration in graphics. She lives with her husband, Scott, and their hound dog, Charlie. In her free time, she enjoys hanging out with friends at Asheville's many wonderful restaurants and breweries, cooking, writing, watching movies, and volunteering with the young people at her church. **USAE:** How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Kessler: I feel very honored to be selected as a participant in this year's 30 Under 30 program, and also to be included in a group of so many amazing destination professionals. I am looking forward to learning from all of them during our time at the convention and throughout the upcoming year.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job? **Kessler:** The most challenging part of my job is keeping up with everything that's happening in the destination! I feel very fortunate to be able to tell the stories of such a vibrant and rapidly growing city, and to be able to share those stories across so many platforms via social media, email marketing and our website. Asheville is the sort of place where it's easy to experience the destination like a local would, which for me means that almost all of our dining, arts and entertainment news is travel news. From new restaurants and breweries to dozens of seasonal festivals, and from ever-evolving outdoor adventures to newly uncovered stories from the past, I'm never at a loss for content inspiration.

USAE: How was your experience of making your video?

Kessler: After three years as a part of the Asheville CVB's PR team, I am no stranger to the camera—although

getting in front of it to be the central character in a four-minute video was still a bit daunting. Fortunately, I was able to call on the expertise of a local production team who works with us on most of our video projects. I had complete confidence in their ability to take our conversation and make it look wonderful. They suggested that we shoot in a location where I would be as comfortable as possible, so we went to the French Broad Chocolate Lounge, a very popular local dessert spot where we may or may not have all ordered chocolate after the shoot. As far as the interview itself, I would have to say that my answers came together quite naturally—I love working with the Asheville CVB and am very proud of our destination and the accomplishments of our team.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Kessler: I have to say the person who has provided me with the most guidance, support, constructive feedback, and motivation has been our Senior Communications Manager, Dodie Stephens. When I came to the CVB in 2010, she and I made up our two-person PR team, so immediately there was a high level of trust and sharing of responsibilities. She has connected me with countless local and media partners and has always encouraged me to make the most of the opportunities that have arisen. Even now that the department has expanded and she's my supervisor, I still know that I can go to Dodie with any question or idea and I will be welcomed with a thoughtful and

honest discussion. We also have a lot in common personally, especially when it comes to our enjoyment of the local restaurants. I just have to be careful of her love of spicy food—if she says it's "not too hot," then I know to stay away!

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Kessler: The role of a CVB in a community—apart from the stated purpose of increasing overnight visits—is to facilitate a dialogue between the visitors and the community itself. The CVB can share the stories and experiences of that community with the world, providing visitors of all kinds with a reliable source for destination information and helping to connect them to those great experiences. The CVB can also provide the community

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Becca VanLandingham
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six additional Florida delegates:

- Leroy Bridges
- Kimberly Corbets
- Brandon Hall
- Eddie Kirsch
- Kat Lewis
- Sky Wheeler

Becca VanLandingham
Executive Operations Representative
VISIT FLORIDA

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with feedback in the form of visitation and visitor engagement, favorable press coverage, and information regarding the industry's economic impact. Likewise, if there is an opportunity for improvement in the community, the CVB can identify that as well and, in some cases, work with local partners to make a positive change. In Asheville we have the Tourism Product Development Fund, which provides grants for capital projects that will attract new visitors and which helps to fill those needs within the destination. One of our organization's taglines is "tourism builds community," which I really feel is the result of that effective dialogue.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Kessler: I graduated from college in 2008 with a degree in journalism, torn between pursuing a career in publishing and living in Asheville. My first job out of school was an internship at a local lifestyle magazine and a position in group sales at a non-profit conference center, which was really my introduction to the hospitality industry. As I got to know Asheville better, I became the go-to person in the office for restaurant recommendations. When the PR and marketing assistant position opened up at the Asheville CVB in 2010, it seemed like a natural fit. At that time, I don't think I had ever heard the term "destination marketing," but now it seems like I've been a part of the tourism community forever. I'm very much looking forward to connecting in person with more of that community this year.

Eddie Kirsch, Content Coordinator, Visit Sarasota (Fla.)



Eddie Kirsch, 26, has been with Visit Sarasota since Oct. 2013. He graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in Convergence Multimedia Journalism (Magna Cum Laude) and Philosophy (Departmental Honors). Outside of work, he practices some photography and videography. He especially loves documenting the places he visits on vacation.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Kirsch: I feel very honored to be selected as a 30 Under 30 winner, and very excited as well! I look forward to meeting other young professionals in the industry and am eager to learn as much as I can from DMO leaders at DMAI.

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

Kirsch: The diversity of marketable features about Sarasota County actually might be the most challenging part of my job. We have great beaches, a vibrant arts culture, eco-recreational activities,

excellent restaurants, and several other facets spread out over a sizeable geographic area. To represent and market all these things is quite a challenge!

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Kirsch: Loved it. I often make videos as part of my job, and the open parameters of a video allowed us to have a creative take on how best to visually represent ourselves. The whole experience was a lot of fun.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Kirsch: My biggest mentors are probably my father and my mother, though they rarely give me advice. The older I grow, the more I realize how difficult it is to balance personal time, a professional career, and a checkbook. Without seeing them work as hard as they did to afford every opportunity to my sisters and myself, I wouldn't be the person I am today.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Kirsch: A CVB should attract visitors to stay and play in the destination area and function as an encouraging and friendly community voice that serves to enrich and preserve the distinctive qualities of the destination.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Kirsch: It wasn't something I thought I would ever get into. Prior to this position, I worked for a local community media organization — which predominately produced and published local weekly newspapers. I was ready for a change, and while I was hesitant to leave the journalism industry at first, I haven't looked back!

Jessica Leonard, Communications Manager, Experience Fayetteville



Jessica Leonard, 27, graduated from the University of Arkansas. She lives in Fayetteville, Ark., with her husband, Jacob, and dog, Lois Lane. They are major Razorback fans, so you'll find them tailgating from sunrise to sunset during college football season. When not "calling the Hogs," she is either sewing, painting, working in her vegetable garden, drinking a local beer, or working on a random craft project.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Leonard: It is an honor to be named to DMAI's 30 Under 30 class of 2014. The other inductees are very inspiring, and I feel proud to be in such great company. I am very passionate about the travel and tourism industry, and I hope that one day I can be a leader and mentor to someone young and eager like myself.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

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CONGRATULATIONS KYLE SADEWHITE!

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Leonard: The most challenging part of my job is trying to prioritize my tasks. I feel so passionately about all aspects of my job that sometimes it's hard to remember that I can't do everything at once.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Leonard: (Laughs out loud) My video experience was... interesting. I am very comfortable in front of a news camera, but for some reason I felt super awkward asking someone to film me for a personal reason. I did enjoy the process of storyboarding and editing, but the on-camera stuff, not so much.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Leonard: I have a hard time picking one person as my biggest mentor. I have had many special influences in my career and am grateful that I have many people I can come to when I have to make a tough decision.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Leonard: I think CVBs are some of the most undervalued and underestimated organizations in the tourism industry. We work hard behind the scenes—for the most part—to make sure that people know how great our destination truly is and that they have a wonderful experience once they get here. Most people who visit a destination will never step foot into a Visitors Center, but if we've done our job, they'll know where to go and what to see anyway.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Leonard: For the money. Ha! No, if someone tells you that, they are lying. I

mailed in Advertising & Public Relations in college, and by the time I graduated I was an avid traveler. I started working in the Visitors Center at the Fayetteville Visitors Bureau part-time the summer after I graduated. This was five years ago, so I helped launch their Facebook page and did some other PR work such as writing story ideas. I left for a full-time corporate position three months later. Luckily, they created a full-time Communications Manager position that fall and asked me to come back and interview. I enthusiastically agreed, and it's been "happily ever after" since then.

Kat Lewis, Online Relations Manager, Visit Tampa Bay



Kat Lewis, 29, was born and raised in Richmond, Va., and moved to Tampa eight years ago. She graduated from Radford University with a concentration in Public Relations. Lewis learned how to play golf in college and tied out for

the University's division one women's golf team. She made the team and later received a golf scholarship. She doesn't play competitively anymore, but she enjoys volunteering and playing golf with kids at the First Tee of Tampa Bay.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Lewis: Visit Tampa Bay's mission is to create vibrant economic growth by selling and promoting the Tampa Bay destination. The visitor's bureau along with local business partners, civic leaders, and our community have formed a partnership that benefits the needs for accurate, official, and reliable information about Tampa Bay being a top travel and meetings destination.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Lewis: Two years ago, I was hired to run the first-ever social media command center for a political convention. We were tasked with training 70 community partners on social media to work inside our RNC Social Media Command Center. Our goal was to protect the Tampa Bay destination brand and offer help to those visiting the area. It was an amazing learning experience, and I am thankful for that opportunity each and every day. I think it was Confucius who once said, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." I love what I do, and I couldn't be luckier to share my passion for the city I love—my home.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Lewis: I am a mix of multiple emotions. I am completely humbled and excited to be one of the recipients of such a prestigious award. I feel completely honored to be chosen and surrounded by a talented and dynamic group of the up-and-coming

travel industry leaders throughout the U.S.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Lewis: The most challenging part of my job is creating creative compelling and engaging content for a forever-always changing audience as well as staying up-to-date on the latest social media trends. Finding the balance between the two is challenging, but it is the key to success. I feel that being a creative writer is not only a challenge, but also a privilege and a gift. There is something magical about gifting a story to someone else and as content creators we get the unique chance to live every experience more than once... in the moment and then again later, which in my opinion is well worth the challenge.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Lewis: Both my parents are my mentors and my biggest fans. I come from a very creative family. My mother is extremely talented and was a fine art major and later a designer in New York City. She introduced me to the importance of travel at 8 years old. We visited New York City, and I will never forget the feeling of exploration and opening my eyes to an entirely different world. Both of my parents have always supported following my dreams, no matter how crazy the idea is or where they take me. I am very blessed.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Lewis: Making the video was a really fun and amazing learning experience. I had never shot, produced, or edited a video before. It is amazing the things that you can accomplish when you step out of your comfort zone... and when you are faced with a deadline.

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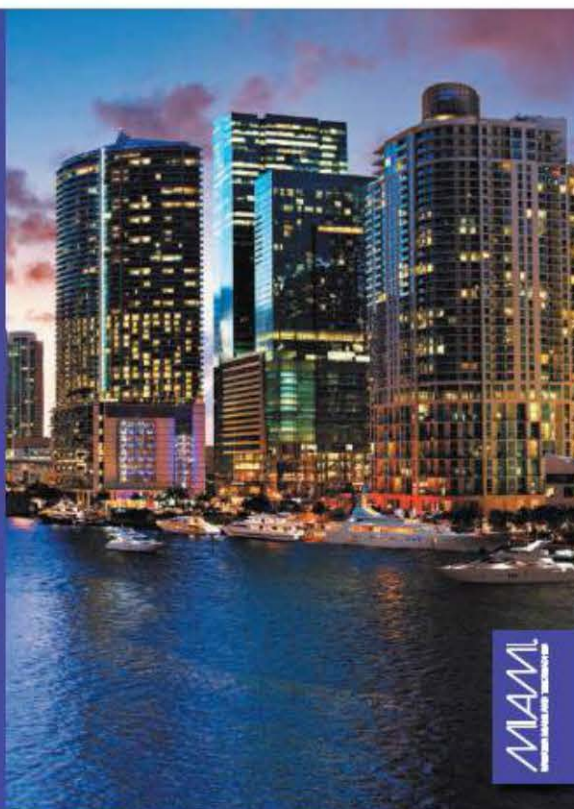
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Liz Mabe, Internet Content Manager, Branson/Lakes Area CVB



Liz Mabe, 25, and her husband, Denton, are the proud parents of a two-year-

old son named Phoenix. An avid reader, she says she also loves to get out and be a tourist in her own town.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Mabe: I'm truly honored to be included in DMAI's 30 under 30 program. I'm excited to attend DMAI for the first time in July and get to know my peers.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Mabe: I believe that the role of the CVB in a community is to serve as the voice of the destination to consumers and the voice of the consumers back to the destination.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Mabe: I've been involved in the tourism industry since college. My husband's family is in the entertainment industry here in Branson. I had several internships throughout the community that got me involved with the CVB. Immediately, I knew that I'd love to work in destination marketing and was thrilled when I was able to join the team at the CVB.

USAE: What is the most challenging

part of your job?

Mabe: The most challenging part of my job is managing the show and attraction schedules that are featured on our website. With more than 100 shows and 100 attractions there is a large amount of data to keep up-to-date.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Mabe: I had a blast making my video. I'm normally the one behind the camera, so it was a different experience to be in front of it. There were a lot of "Can we start over?" moments.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Mabe: My biggest mentor is definitely the Branson/Lakes Area CVB's Director of Internet Marketing and my boss, James Little. He's really pushed me to think outside the box and not be afraid to tackle the crazy ideas.

Amos Orr, Destination Content Manager, Visit Lake Charles (La.)



Amos Orr, 28, has worked for Visit Lake Charles for two years. The self-proclaimed "huge Notre Dame Football fan" graduated from Grace College in Winona Lake (Ind.), having double majored in Business Administration & Marketing. He has a baby son, Emmett, with his wife of five-and-a-half years, Chelsey, "the most beautiful woman in the world!"

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Orr: It was a great honor to have been nominated by Shelley Johnson, my Executive Director. Her trust gives me confidence and encouragement to keep growing my career and abilities in the tourism industry. On being accepted as a recipient of the honor, I was shocked. There are so many great talents and minds in tourism; it is a pleasure to be considered among them. I want to make the most of this opportunity, not just to advance my career, but to offer whatever knowledge and skills I have to the industry as a whole.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Orr: First, I looked at videos from years past to get some inspiration. I then strapped on the GoPro and started to tell my story. I am not too great on film and had dozens upon dozens of retakes. Eventually, I was able to edit, cut, crop, and paste my way to something that wasn't a total embarrassment.

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

Orr: There are many aspects of my job that I love; in fact, there may be too much of a good thing. I get to be a social media strategist, website manager, analytics tracker, tech expert, and photographer/videographer, just to name a few. Working out a proper balance so I don't get lost in one particular aspect of my job is probably the most difficult.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Orr: Prior to working at the CVB, I thought a CVB's role was to just promote the area to tourists—there is so much more to it than that. In our case, the sales staff works tirelessly to secure sporting events, meetings, conventions, and tour groups that add to the economy. Without the CVB's effort to bid and secure these types of events, there would be a drastic decrease in room nights and exposure for our area. In addition, we provide added value for community businesses by partnering with them on various promotions and

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projects. We help give the community a unified message that they can stand behind and be proud of.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Orr: There have been two people that have played a huge part in my development: Angie Manning, Communications Director, and Shelley Johnson, Executive Director. From day one, they have shown a deep trust and dedication to the development of my craft by sending me to various conferences, investing in programs and technology, and giving me sound advice along the way. I can't say enough, of what this opportunity means to me.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Orr: Prior to working at the CVB, I was a teller at a bank doing minor web/social media work on the side for non-profits. Angie happened to be on the board from one of the organizations that I was helping. The CVB realized there was a need to develop Southwest Louisiana's digital footprint and decided to create the brand new position of Online Content Manager. I was blessed to be given this opportunity.

**Kyle Sadewhite, Sr. Sales Manager,
City of Independence Tourism**



An avid fly fisherman and golfer, Kyle Sadewhite is also the proud owner of a German Shepherd named Lucy. He said Lucy would be upset if playing with her wasn't included in his favorite pastimes. The 27-year-old has been with his organization for a little more than two years.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Sadewhite: I feel extremely honored. Being nominated by my Director and then being recognized by the top industry leaders is something that I will carry with me throughout my career. Having the ability to represent this year's class will prove to be a great learning opportunity. It is reassurance that within the Tourism industry the young people are truly respected and much thought is put in to professionally developing them.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Sadewhite: I would say one of the most challenging parts of my job is knowing that every day is not the same. Although this is often one of the best parts of my job, it takes a lot of planning and organization to know what it is I need to accomplish during that day and make sure I stay focused enough to get it done.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Sadewhite: The experience was a lot of fun. We were able to involve our tech department for help, which was a great training opportunity for them. Additionally, it was extremely nerve-wracking. I can comfortably stand up in front of 100 plus people and have no problem talking; however, when the tiny lens of a camera is staring me down I become so nervous. Luckily, I had the help of my co-worker Olivia to help coach me and tell me things I need to change, in-between takes. And believe me, there were a good amount of takes we had to do.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Sadewhite: Two people in my life that have always been my biggest mentors have been my Mom and Dad. Each one of them gives me such great advice, coming from two different points of view, which has truly been a great blessing. If it hadn't been for a lot of the help and support they have given me over the years, I am not sure I would be in this position. From a professional level, without a doubt my biggest mentor is my Director Cori. She took a chance on me as an intern and after that a full-time position, and if it wasn't for her and that trust she has in me I have no doubt I

would not be part of the 2014 30 Under 30 class. She has taught me so many things about this industry and really given me the freedom to experience things, either good or bad, on my own. It is something that I am not sure I could ever thank her enough for, but as long as I continue to go on and advance my career, I know she will say that is the best way I could ever thank her.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Sadewhite: I think the role of a CVB in the community is an important one. Unfortunately, I think it is one that gets overlooked very often, especially in smaller communities. As a CVB representative, I think one of the biggest pieces of our jobs, although not listed in job descriptions, is community engagement and really making sure our community buys into our mission. Being a strong brand ambassador is a great way to make sure the community is behind you and always understanding what you do.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Sadewhite: I got into destination marketing right out of college. I went to Kansas State University for Hospitality Management and was looking for an internship when I got offered one with the Independence Tourism Department. Although I was very familiar with the hospitality industry, there was much to destination marketing that I just didn't know. However, with the guidance of an awesome Director and great staff, I quickly realized that this is what I want to do for my career.

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NEWS

Honorees

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Courtney Sculley, Account Manager, Austin CVB



Courtney Sculley, 28, has worked for the Austin CVB for four years. She received a Bachelor of Science in Public Relations at the University of Texas at Austin and a certificate in Business Foundations from McCombs School of Business. She enjoys exploring new Austin bands and music venues, as well as practicing yoga.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Sculley: I feel inspired to be a 30 Under 30 recipient. It's exciting to know I'll be connected to peers who will shape the DMO industry for decades to come.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Sculley: I grew up in a household that was actively involved with city planning. My mother acted as Assistant City Manager for the City of Phoenix. My father, Mike Sculley, served as the Executive Director of the Maricopa County Sports Commission, sharing office space with the Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau. I'll be the first to admit that many Millennials have never heard of a Convention and Visitors Bureau. I attribute considering a position at the Austin CVB to my parents exposing me to the economic impact the Phoenix CVB had on our community. My friends in other industries now know who the CVB is and what we do, and won't be shy to say we have the best job in town!

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

Sculley: As the Account Manager for International (10+ peak), West Coast and Midwest (10-200 peak) Convention Sales, I handle a diverse geographic territory. With it brings lots of travel, but also high lead volume. The most challenging part of my job is to balance being out of the office and servicing high volume, short-term meetings opportunities.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Sculley: Rewarding! I was able to showcase venues and new development that were established since I started with the Austin CVB less than five years ago. Not only have I grown since I started with the Austin team, but our destination has, too.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Sculley: I'm fortunate to have many

mentors within the DMO industry, but I must credit my mother as my first and most influential mentor of my personal and professional growth. My mother, Sheryl Sculley, has more than 30 years of public management experience and was instrumental in shaping the cities I've lived in and compete against for convention business today (Phoenix and San Antonio). While it's important to celebrate small accomplishments, my mother quickly reminds me that there's always room for improvement. As one of the first female executives in the public sector, she demonstrates that it pays to take risks, think big, and set results-focused personal and professional goals.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Sculley: I believe CVBs serve as a liaison between private and public sectors within a community. We are able to serve as ambassadors for Austin's one-of-a-kind culture, ensuring visitors know about the city's universal appeal. At the same time, we're at the pulse of knowing our city's infrastructure and meeting the needs of both the traveler and our partners within the local business community. CVBs demonstrate the ROI our industry brings to a community. It's an extremely rewarding role.

Shanna Smith, CTE, CTA, Partner Communications Manager, San Antonio CVB



Newlywed Shanna Smith joined the San Antonio CVB roughly a year ago. The 27-year-old enjoys travel, teaching yoga, weightlifting, running, and cheering on the NBA champion San Antonio Spurs. She and her husband, Stephen Torres, have a pair of Maltese puppies.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Smith: Even before being selected as a 30 Under 30 winner, I felt incredibly honored by the nomination alone. Today, I feel extremely privileged to be included amongst this distinguished group. I am also tremendously grateful for the opportunities and experiences I have had that have led me to this designation. I will certainly cherish this moment, as it motivates me to look ahead to the future and continue to

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HE'S A YOUNG, SMART,
SOCIAL SAVVY, MEDIA MASTERING,
DESTINATION MARKETING
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NEWS

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make an impact in our industry. I am greatly looking forward to meeting everyone and learning a lot at the DMAI 2014 Annual Convention.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Smith: I had so much fun reminiscing on career highlights and voicing my thoughts on the future of our industry. What made it extra special was running all over town, capturing and sharing some San Antonio highlights in my video—including the Alamo and Riverwalk. My husband, a fellow creative and now San Antonio transplant, also took the opportunity to do some sightseeing that day and so graciously helped me edit my video. It was truly a memorable and unique experience!

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Smith: This is not necessarily job-specific, but I have found throughout my career that overcoming a certain age stigma can be quite a challenge. It can be difficult for some to have full confidence in a young person's capability, knowledge, drive, and maturity. Overcoming generalizations and perceptions takes work, ambition, and making sure that you are setting the standard and not letting anyone else define you.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Smith: I have been exceptionally fortunate to have had many mentors, including some of our industry's greatest and brightest minds. If I had to pick the most impactful, it would have to be my parents, Jerry and Loma Smith. They have succeeded in running their own business in San Antonio for more than 30 years. Since day one, they have lovingly taught me to follow my dreams and passions and to never give up.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Smith: Convention and Visitors Bureaus take on many different structures based on their particular community; however, we all serve the same crucial function: to be the sales, marketing, and servicing arm for our destinations. We diligently promote and market our destinations for the purpose of positively affecting our economies. On a local front, it is imperative that CVBs be the source of industry information and be transparent for our organizations—constantly educating stakeholders, policymakers, and influencers about the value of our industry.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Smith: I was introduced to the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau by Dr. Doug McIntyre, one of my top mentors and professors at Hardin-Simmons University. He served on their board of directors and knew that I would be an ideal candidate for the CVB. Without his encouragement to stay in Abilene after my undergrad, I probably would not be in the destination-marketing industry today. From there, I was fortunate to grow with Nanci Liles in Abilene, have the opportunity to lead my own team in Granbury, and now learn from Casandra Matej in my hometown: San Antonio.

Ashley Steckel, Advertising Sales Director, VisitPITTSBURGH



Ashley Steckel, 28, graduated from Allegheny College with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Theater and from Duquesne University with a Master of Arts in Corporate Communications. She has worked for VisitPITTSBURGH for two-and-a-half years. Recently, she started blogging (<http://ashley-steckel.squarespace.com>). "My mom likes to say that I'd win awards as a competitive shopper, so shopping is a hobby, too!" she says.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Steckel: I am honestly very honored and excited for the recognition as a future destination marketing leader. To be included with this year's class and the last three years of participants is privilege. Just reading through the names and seeing their videos of my fellow classmates makes me thrilled to be included with them and I'm looking forward to the exchange of ideas.

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

Steckel: The most challenging part of my job is explaining what VisitPITTSBURGH does for the community and how we engage with our partners. I work in the Partnership Development Department, and often I am one of the only people who speak with locals on a regular basis, so I spend a lot of my time explaining the mission and goals of VisitPITTSBURGH and the benefits of being a partner. While challenging, it is also highly rewarding.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Steckel: I really enjoyed making my video for DMAI's 30 Under 30 2014. It gave me the opportunity to look at VisitPITTSBURGH and all we've accomplished as a CVB and destination. I had a lot of fun thinking of different places to highlight and film, and I really took my time answering the questions. Digital Marketing and Social Media are two platforms that are incredibly important to Destination Marketing, so it was a great way to flex my creativity and use both.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Steckel: I've been incredibly lucky to have two tremendous mentors at VisitPITTSBURGH: Colleen Smith and David Atkins. Colleen Smith, Partnership Development Director, has been my mentor since I started. She's shown me how to adapt to various situations, tailor my approach, and has always made sure that I'm having fun. Colleen mentors by her actions, her words, and her sense of humor. I've been incredibly grateful to her for all that she has done for me and continues to do for me.

David Atkins, VisitPITTSBURGH's Vice

President, Digital Marketing, is another mentor of mine. David has shown a willingness to share his skills and knowledge of digital marketing and social media. He is patient and takes his time in explanation. He is also open to dialogue and acts as a sounding board to my ideas and problems. David also provides me a fresh perspective since he is not in my department.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Steckel: The role of a CVB in a community is to stimulate economic development through increased travel and tourism, as well as enhance the perception of the destination being marketed.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Steckel: I knew a little bit about VisitPITTSBURGH from my time as a Marketing Assistant at Fifth Avenue Place. VisitPITTSBURGH was looking at office and welcome center space in the building, and I knew from my brief discussion with them that I would really like to work for them to promote Pittsburgh as a destination. They were so enthusiastic about their job and it lit a fire within me. There weren't any opportunities at that time, but about a year-and-a-half later I had the chance to apply for a position in their Partnership Development Department. I jumped at it, interviewed, and was hired. It was an absolutely great decision, and I've loved going to work every day for the last two and half years.

Jennifer Valencic, Corporate Partnership Consultant, Positively Cleveland



Jennifer Valencic is 29 and graduated from Ohio University. Married last April to Jim Valencic, she loves spending time outside in the summer months of Cleveland. Jennifer loves to relax outside and read, take her bikes to the Cleveland Metroparks for long rides, participate in outdoor yoga/fitness classes, or just sit by Lake Erie and take in the scenery. She told USAE, "I sometimes even get to enjoy spending time on the water in our friends' boat."

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Valencic: It feels great! I am humbled by the honor of being selected. Being the Corporate Partnership Consultant, my position was newly created when I was hired into it about one-and-a-half years ago. It is so rewarding to know that the organization feels that not only I, but the corporate community, have made such an impact on Positively Cleveland in such a short amount of time.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Valencic: The experience in making my video was both fun and challenging. It's something I've never done before, and therefore didn't feel totally comfortable with. I give a lot of credit to those people whose careers involved being in front of the camera, because it is not easy! That said, we asked one of our corporate partners to help us with the production, and it was fun to interact with them in a totally new way. They walked me through everything and helped me relax. The whole crew was very excited to learn that I had been selected! That experience enabled me to build an even stronger relationship with this partner.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Valencic: The most challenging part of my job is the patience and time it takes to build a new corporate partner. Typically, organizations join their local conventions and visitors bureau because they are looking for quick results and quick ROI. Our corporate partners are very different. It takes a long time to develop the relationship, identify unique ways to collaborate, receive approval up the chains for support, and engage the company on a deeper level. Because these companies are not looking for visitor traffic through their partnership, it often takes several meetings, conversations, and engagements before the "right" opportunity pops up. But it's also one of my favorite parts. I love the moment when all the puzzle pieces come together and we find the perfect synergy for a partnership.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Valencic: My biggest mentor is my father. I believe work ethic is something that is instilled in you from childhood, and you either have it... or you don't. My father is the hardest-working man I have ever known. He has taught me the value of a dollar, the importance of showing up and always doing your best work, and the importance of keeping your commitments. There are many things in this world that are teachable once you're hired—work ethic is not one of them. I am forever grateful to have a father that showed me that from the get-go. While he is a man of few words, I know my success makes him very proud.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Valencic: I would definitely consider the CVB to be a connector in the community. We bring people into town for various reasons, and connect them to all of the resources a community has to offer. Additionally, we connect our partners to each other and encourage collaboration to become a strong, unified travel, and tourism destination.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Valencic: After working at a local, grassroots non-profit for five years, I was looking for the next step in my career. Positively Cleveland was quickly gaining a favorable reputation in the community, and they posted a position that was as if it was tailored specifically for me. I immediately forwarded my resume and cover letter. While my background was not directly related to hospitality, this position was unique and an understanding of the corporate community was necessary to succeed. My previous career was managing volunteers from the corporate community, so it was a great match. Luckily, the organization felt the same way and I was hired as the Corporate Partnership Consultant in January 2013.

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Becca VanLandingham,
Events Operation Representative,
VISIT FLORIDA



Becca VanLandingham, 29, has been working for VISIT FLORIDA as the Events Operation Representative for three-and-a-half years. She graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing and Management and a Master's degree in Recreation and Leisure Services Administration. VanLandingham is engaged to be married on Nov. 22 and is "super excited and busy with planning." She said she loves making old things into something new, hence her love for antique and thrift store shopping and estate sales. "I love old items that have history," she told USAE.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

VanLandingham: I feel honored and excited!

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

VanLandingham: I kind of stumbled upon the job at VISIT FLORIDA and once I did my research, I knew it was the kind of company I wanted to work for. Who doesn't love travel and tourism?

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

VanLandingham: Juggling many different tasks and projects all at once—but I love it!

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

VanLandingham: It was great learning experience, and it went pretty smoothly but with lots of takes!

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

VanLandingham: The role of a CVB is to market the area it represents in order to attract visitors and therefore promote economic development.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

VanLandingham: As a farmer, my dad has always inspired me to be a hard worker, always setting the best example for me by supporting his family. His strong work ethic has been instilled in me since I started my first job working at the family farm when I was 15.

Sky Wheeler, Sales & Operations Manager,
Ocala/Marion County (Fla.)
Visitors & Convention Bureau



Sky Wheeler, 29, joined the Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau on April 1, 2013. Married for seven years, she loves sports and can always be counted on to cheer for the University of Central Florida Knights, Miami Dolphins, and Atlanta Braves. She also loves to read and cook.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Wheeler: This is such an incredible honor! I have been keeping up with the others who were selected, and I am humbled to be in their company. It's so fun to get a sneak peek of everyone before we meet officially in Las Vegas.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Wheeler: Making the video was really fun but daunting at the same time. I know that people aren't always readily knowledgeable about my destination, so I was really focused on trying to give a good overview of the area and all of the hard work we do here, while also keeping it light and interesting. Our downtown area is pretty busy on a typical day, so I got quite a few notes and texts asking me what kind of movie I was making, so that was fun!

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Wheeler: There have been many influential people in my life who have helped shape and encourage me. In the past year, I have been incredibly blessed to work for Loretta Shaffer, CDME, Executive Director for the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau. Loretta has given me opportunities to learn and grow, while sharing her knowledge of the industry. I have been able to take her expertise in tourism and blend it with my skillset to be an even stronger employee in the tourism industry, and for that I am so grateful.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Wheeler: The role of the CVB is multi-dimensional. There are so many things that our small team takes on for our community. We are the advocate for the industry partners, we are the advocate for our community, and we are the first touch point for people who are planning a trip. In this day and age, people may form an entire itinerary for a vacation or meeting without ever talking to a person, so we maintain a strong digital presence as well.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Wheeler: I have always wanted a career that gave me an opportunity to impact my community. I have a background in marketing, sales, and fund development,

so applying all of those to the community I live in while creating positive economic growth is a huge bonus.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Wheeler: The most challenging part of my job has been learning the subtleties of destination marketing. I know my destination inside and out, but the industry carries a bit of a learning curve. I have been very lucky to be accepted in the DMAI CDME program, which has really helped give me a holistic view of the industry.

Brittany White,
Marketing & Communications
Coordinator, Oklahoma City CVB



Brittany White, 24, is one of the youngest winners of the 30 Under 30 honor. She graduated from Oklahoma State University with a BS in Public Relations and has been with the CVB for a year-and-a-half. Her two biggest hobbies are travel and music—or at least that's where most of her money goes, she says.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

White: While job searching after college, I just happened to see the opening at the Oklahoma City CVB and it piqued my interest. I love traveling and communications, so putting the two together for a job seemed fitting, really. I think it is the perfect industry for me—my love for travel is able to go into my job in the tourism industry as I promote travel to other people. It was just a natural fit!

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

White: Very excited! It was an honor to be selected as a part of the Class of 2014. I honestly didn't expect to get it. Once I found out, I was very proud of myself and the CVB for all that I have been able to accomplish with them over the last year-and-a-half.

USAE: What's the most challenging part of your job?

White: The most challenging part of my job is keeping up with trends in the digital world. Social media is ever changing and plays a huge part in communications these days, so we always want to make sure we stay on the forefront of that.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

White: Nerve-racking! I am not used to being in front of the camera, so I was very nervous when we first started shooting. After the first few takes, it became easier and we just had fun with it. I just started talking about what I knew, improvised a little bit, and it ended up turning out great! I also credit some of that to our videographer, Nate Fisher.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

White: This may be a bit cliché, but my biggest mentor is my dad. He is always there to lend me advice, support me in my decisions, and a good role model to have.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

White: CVBs play a very important role in the community, especially for our hotels and attractions. We are able to promote and share their services to the local community, visitors, and meeting planners. In a sense, it's almost like we act as an extension of them.

Cynthia Wildman,
Manager of Consumer Marketing,
Vancouver, Coast & Mountains
Tourism Region



Cynthia Wildman and her fiancé, Roman Lisagor, will be married in Vancouver on Aug. 3. Over the past four years, the couple has explored the globe, visiting Paris, London, Amsterdam, Moscow, Stockholm, Chicago, and New York, while also discovering new haunts in their hometown.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Wildman: I am very honored to be selected as a participant in the DMAI 30 Under 30 program. When I received the e-mail from Lauren Benedict announcing that I was selected, I had a smile from ear to ear (and it lasted the whole day.) I am very excited about this opportunity and look forward to meeting the 30 Under 30 class at the DMAI Annual Conference in Las Vegas.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Wildman: I was very fortunate to work with some great individuals with the Vancouver Canadians Baseball Team. Specifically, the Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Graham Wall, taught me a lot about business and sales. These skills have been extremely valuable, and I continue to use them every day.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Wildman: In such a diverse region with so many things to see and do (our tagline is "All Things Are Possible"), there aren't enough resources (time and budget) to promote everything that Vancouver, Coast & Mountains has to offer.

USAE: What was the experience like of making your video?

Wildman: Making the video as part of my application was a very fun process. I had never used the video-editing software before, so there was a little bit of a learning curve initially, but I was really happy with the finished product. My favorite part of making the video was creating the

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storyboard. Fortunately, I had access to some great b-rolls of Vancouver, Coast & Mountains, so I got to showcase the beauty of our region as well.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Wildman: As a regional destination-marketing organization, Vancouver, Coast & Mountains looks to inspire visitors to travel to and throughout the region. We work closely with community DMOs and tourism business to connect these stakeholders with travelers, encouraging them to stay longer, spend more, and share their experiences.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Wildman: After graduating with a Bachelor of Business with a concentration in Marketing from Simon Fraser University, I started my career working with the Vancouver Canadians Baseball Team. I have always been passionate about tourism, marketing, and the place that I work and play, so this position with the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains Tourism Region was a great opportunity to combine all of my passions.

*Kristin Wing, CTA,
Manager of Tourism Development,
Anaheim/Orange County Visitor &
Convention Bureau*



Recently engaged Kristin Wing, CTA, says the past year has been a whirlwind of excitement for her and her fiancé, Phillip McCauley, who are hoping to get married next spring. A global explorer, the 28-year-old has traveled extensively throughout Asia and Europe, but she loves living in Southern California, saying she thrives in the sunshine.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Wing: There are so many intelligent, creative and aspiring young professionals in today's DMO industry that I am humbled and absolutely honored to be a part of the DMAI 30 Under 30 Class of 2014!

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Wing: As an undergrad at Chapman University, I studied Marketing & Communications. I like to know why people do what they do and how to influence them to do what you want them to do. Then, because I loved to travel so much, I went to grad school abroad studying Service Management in Sweden. That's where I started my passion for tourism and hospitality. When I graduated, I knew I wanted to

work somewhere that gave me opportunity to learn more about the various segments of our industry. If you work in a hotel, or attraction, or transportation company, for example, then you are limited to which types of partners you can work with. However, working for a CVB, I have the ability to work with many segments in the tourism and hospitality industry: hotels, attractions, transportation companies, event venues, shopping/dining retailers, and even other CVBs.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Wing: The role of the CVB is to generate more business to and increase the value of the destination. CVBs maximize the awareness of and importance of tourism. Without tourism, the citizens of the community would have to pay higher taxes and wouldn't have the wonderful activities, restaurants, and shopping retailers for locals to also enjoy. By unifying the community through industry programs and events, working closely with the Mayor, renovating transportation services, CVBs help find solutions for the city to create better flow and experiences for both locals and visitors alike.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Wing: The most challenging part of my job is not having enough time in the day. One could easily argue that same challenge in any job. However, as a CVB, we have the pleasure of working on multiple projects and with many different entities on a daily basis, that our partnership opportunities are endless. I could work 20 hours a day and still have a long list of opportunities that I want to pursue because I also make it a priority to answer all requests and help all partners achieve success. In turn, it will help them as well as our community.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Wing: Making my own video was a little nerve-racking at first, but then it ended up being lots of fun. My two terrific colleagues and I were able to work on something fun and be creative because it was our own project, not that of someone else. This was ours.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Wing: My biggest mentor is not only one of my strongest supporters, but also the person who takes the time to give honest feedback when she knows it might sting a little because, in the long run, those are the things that teach me the most. Christine Locke is the Vice President of Marketing at my bureau, and she has always taken the time to listen and advise me on multiple levels, whether it is for work or personal life. Thanks to her guidance, I have been able to excel at my position and been given opportunities that I may not have had without her. She has helped me believe in myself and always encouraged me to strive to be better at everything I do.

*Aaron Wodin-Schwartz, Director
of Public Policy, Brand USA*



Aaron Wodin-Schwartz, 31, grew up in rural New England. He got his Bachelor's degree at the University of Massachusetts and did graduate work at The George Washington University where he focused on Latin American studies. He plays soccer in three leagues. When USAE caught up with him, he was in Brazil watching the World Cup on television with six friends.

USAE: How do you feel to be a 30 Under 30 winner?

Wodin-Schwartz: I'm proud. It's a big universe out there in the destination-marketing world. So it's great for Brand USA to be recognized, and I am myself personally proud to be one to be one of the people chosen.

USAE: How was the experience of making your video?

Wodin-Schwartz: It was fun. It's nice to talk in an open format about what I do and what I enjoy about the job. It was a good opportunity for the free flow format which is different than what we normally get to do.

USAE: Who has been your biggest mentor and how?

Wodin-Schwartz: At the risk of sound of cheesy, my current boss, Anne Madison, Chief Communications Officer for Brand USA, is my mentor. As a corporate communications officer at Brand USA, she is expert in communications both for external and intra communications and has mentored me in both.

USAE: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Wodin-Schwartz: Working at coalition building and consensus building is the most challenging part of my job. Brand USA is a private-public partnership. There are a lot of projects where I'm the bridge between the public and private side.

USAE: How would you characterize the role of a CVB in a community?

Wodin-Schwartz: It's a dual one in the community. On the one hand you are focused on economic development; on the other hand you want to welcome the world to your destination, to get to know it and visit. You are the public face of that community outside of that community. It really is a special kind of honor.

USAE: How did you get into destination marketing?

Wodin-Schwartz: I was working at the Department of Commerce and there was an interesting job to help start up, at the time, a destination-marketing company where the public side gets \$100 million a year. There were a lot of programs with federal agencies. It was a special opportunity to come help navigate those rivers. It's been two-and-a-half years. It's been fun to be an early adopter.

*2014's 30 Under 30 Ambassadors:
Marcus Carney
and Gabrielle Dickson*

Marcus Carney of the Tacoma (Wash.) Regional CVB and Gabrielle Dickson of the College Park (Ga.) CVB were selected as Ambassadors for the DMAI 30 Under 30 program.

The Ambassadors experience is designed to further engage past 30 Under 30 participants in a leadership capacity with the incoming class. Both Carney and Dickson received the 30 Under 30 honor last year.

The two young professionals were selected through a nomination/application process. They received complimentary registrations to attend DMAI's Annual Convention along with covered hotel accommodations.

Ambassadors also have the opportunity to be a part of numerous leadership events and opportunities, including (but not limited to): representing the 30 Under 30 Program at the DMAI Board Meeting, attending DMAI's Leadership Reception, mentoring the newly selected Class of 30 Under 30, participating in DMAI committee meetings throughout the year, and advocating for the 30 under 30 program at DMAI and industry events.



Gabrielle Dickson

Dickson, 30, formerly Specialist of Tradeshow Sales for the Atlanta CVB, now serves as Marketing & Project Manager in College Park.

"I'm super excited about the whole experience," she told USAE about being an Ambassador. "Last year, there weren't too many people who did what I did [handling special events, designing booths, etc.]. I wanted to show the other side of being in a DMO."

Dickson majored in hospitality at Georgia State University. She was hired at the Atlanta CVB out of college, where she worked for more than six years. As a 30 Under 30 honoree last year, Dickson said she "learned a ton of information that relates to the DMO world that I wasn't even aware of." "In my previous role, I dealt with associations and getting those clients to see all the benefits of hosting a meeting in Atlanta," she explained. "When I went to DMAI, I felt like the client—I was able to enjoy the conference and hear about challenges and success that other DMOs are or have experienced which I am able to apply in my new marketing role with Meet College Park, Georgia."

In February, Dickson was lured away by newly installed College Park CVB chief Cookie Smoak. Now, she believes it's important for other 30 Under 30 honorees

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— C H A N G E S —



Eglon Simons has been named President of The National Association of Multi-ethnicity in Communications. Simons most recently retired from Cablevision Systems in 2011 after serving most recently as Executive Vice President of Cablevision's Rainbow Advertising Sales Co. charged with overseeing the operations of the diversity-themed company. Simons also worked at CBS Television Stations Division in the 1980s.



Jeff Poole has been named Director of Sales for the Albuquerque CVB. For the last ten years Poole has owned and operated his own business managing group sales accounts for five mid-size destinations. Prior to his most recent role he held senior sales and marketing positions for several hotels and also represented the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board in the Washington D.C. market.



Sam Matheny has been named Chief Technology Officer for the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). He comes to NAB from Policy & Innovation Vice President at Capitol Broadcasting. Before joining the staff in 2012, Matheny was a principal in Capitol Broadcasting media ventures, including News Over Wireless, which provided the first local television news applications for wireless carriers.



Meredith Voller has been named as Director of Sales & Marketing for The Edgewater in Madison, Wisc. The Edgewater is re-opening in August following a \$100 million renovation. Voller has more than a decade of experience in the hospitality industry. She has been Director of Sales for the opening of the PUBLIC Chicago and also Director of Sales & Marketing for Thompson Hotels.



Kevin Gammonley has been named Executive Director of the North American Association of Floor Covering Distributors (NAFCD). He previously served as the Interim Executive Director of the association since April. Gammonley has 23 years of experience running trade associations. He was previously CEO of the National Paper Trade Association and Sr. Director of Client Management at Smith Bucklin Corporation.



Emil Lee, has been named President of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA). Lee is the General Manager of Princess Heights Hotel on St. Maarten. Previously, he was Vice President of CHTA and President of the St. Maarten Hospitality Association. His term is two-years long, and he plans to grow tourism and help build a Caribbean hospitality community that will foster international travel.



Alfredo Arroyo has been named General Manager of the Hotel El Convento in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Previously, Arroyo served as the Food & Beverage Director at La Concha Resort in San Juan. Arroyo was also Assistant to the General Manager at the Courtyard by Marriott Isla Verde. He began his career at the Hotel San Juan in the banquets department and worked his way up to Food & Beverage Director.



Efrain Rosa has been named Hotel Manager at the Condado Vanderbilt Hotel in San Juan Puerto Rico. Rosa is responsible for pre-opening activities for the hotel prior to its Dec. 2014 opening. He was previously General Manager at the Hotel Convento in San Juan. Prior to that, he was General Manager of the Courtyard by Marriott Isla Verde. Rosa started as a luggage porter at the Greenville Spartan Airport Marriott.

C A L E N D A R

August 2-5

Meeting Professionals International, the premier global association community for meeting and event professionals, believes in the unequalled power of events and human connections to advance organizational objectives. This year's World Education Conference will be held in Minneapolis. For more information, please visit www.mpiweb.org/events/wec2014.

August 9-12

Join 5,000+ professionals from associations and nonprofits for a three-day, must-attend networking and education extravaganza: The 2014 ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition

at the Nashville Music City Center. Change the tune of your future with 120+ sessions from Express Learning to insightful General Sessions, an Association Solutions Marketplace, and tons of networking events. For more information, please visit www.asaascenter.org.

September 3-4

HSMAI's MEET serves an industry that takes pride in connecting people to people. Naturally, professional planners expect their own meetings and events to forge the most direct, most personal, and most profitable connections possible. The 2014 MEET National will be held at the Omni Shoreham hotel in Washington, D.C. For more information, please visit www.meetconference.com/.

September 6-8

The Convention Industry Council invites you to see professional development differently at its CMP Conclave during two and a half days of cutting edge courses that will leave you better equipped to take your career to the next level. Collaborate and network with some of the industry's most experienced and innovative leaders in the vibrant backdrop of historic New Orleans. For more information, please visit www.conventionindustry.org.

October 14-16

IMEX America is the place to select from nearly 3,000 suppliers from across the world for your future conferences

and events. Take advantage of this opportunity in Las Vegas to gain new insights from the comprehensive program of education offerings and connect with colleagues who also plan international meetings. For more information, please visit www.imexamerica.com.

October 27-28

ASAE's Exceptional Boards is an intensive two-day workshop for CEOs and their elected officers to explore strategies for strengthening their working relationship and enhancing the board's performance. It will be held at Charleston Place in Charleston, S.C. For more information, please visit www.asaascenter.org.

NEWS

Crawford Hotel at Union Station Opens in Denver

By Mike Santa Rita

Despite last-minute drama when a key developer pulled out of the project taking \$6 million with him, Denver's Union Station is right on track for opening restaurants and bars, and the hotel is already open.

The 112-room Crawford Hotel, an independent hotel built inside the Union Station, offers a variety of luxury amenities. Denver real-estate development

company McWhinney fronted the \$6 million for the project. The Crawford Hotel was named after Denver urban preservationist and Union Station partner Dana Crawford.

The Crawford's uniquely decorated guest rooms reflect the different eras of the building's 100+ year history, including the completed renovation, Julie Dunn, a spokeswoman for Sage Hospitality, which manages the hotel, told USAE.

"They had a partner in the project, that

at the last minute switched leaving the project without \$6 million," Dunn said. But the money devoted to renovating the station eventually came through, according to Dunn.

The Denver hotel opened on July 16, but the opening of the Green Hall featuring restaurants and bars will take place on July 26. It's the site of four full-service independent restaurants from some of the city's best chefs. It remains a train and bus station.

The building at 17th and Wynkoop streets underwent a \$54 million transformation and reopened with a charity gala on July 11. The public grand opening is 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on July 26. The free celebration will allow full access to the building, along with food trucks and live music from the Railbenders, Rachel & the Kings, and Roger Clyne and the Peacemakers.

NRA Writes Against Minimum Wage Increase in *Chicago Sun-Times* Op-Ed

By Todd McElwee

Continuing its opposition to potential hikes in the minimum wage, the National Restaurant Association (NRA) joined with a prominent Chicago restaurateur in penning an Op-Ed piece to the *Chicago Sun-Times* decrying minimum wage increases.

The association is also alerting mem-

bers around the nation of the locations most likely to include ballot items in November.

Scott DeFife, Executive Vice President of Policy & Government Affairs for NRA, and Sam Sanchez, Owner of the John Barleycorn, Moe's Cantina, Old Crow Smokehouse, and Chen's Chinese and Sushi restaurants, penned the piece, which argued against Mayor Rahm

Emanuel's wish for \$13 per hour minimum wage. The editorial was published on July 12.

DeFife and Sanchez wrote: "Mayor Rahm Emanuel's wage task force was inevitably going to come to the wrong conclusion. Dramatically increasing Chicago's minimum wage to \$13 will not bring the economic growth and relief that this city needs."

The men said that although Chicago's economy is on the rise, the unemployment rate is currently above 8% and its youth unemployment figure is more than 25%. They argue that raising the minimum wage will not significantly decrease either number.

"Raising the minimum wage is not a silver bullet solution for addressing the city's economic challenges," the op-ed said. "Raising it to 75% above the rest of the area is extreme. It will not fundamentally address poverty or income inequality. Chicago would be better served by comprehensive economic policies that

promote hiring and growth."

DeFife and Sanchez, who also recently testified before a mayoral taskforce, said more than 70% of restaurant workers receive a wage increase within the first year. They added that restaurants provide more than 10% of the nation's jobs, including more than 300,000 in Chicago.

"We are willing partners, but the task force seems to disregard small businesses and the jobs they provide," the op-ed read. "They were wrong to ignore the recommendations of people who employ and train Chicago's workers and play such active roles in our communities."

On July 14, NRA also released a minimum-wage-voting cheat sheet detailing where bills will, or could, be on the ballot this fall. Voters in Alaska, Illinois, South Dakota,

Eureka (Calif.), and San Francisco will see such items on their ballots. Arkansas, Nebraska, San Diego, Oakland, and Las Cruces (N.M.) could also see them.

Ambassadors

Continued from page 21

to know that "DMAI is doing it right."

"DMAI is #1 in terms of sessions, topics, and speakers that can relate to what you and your destination as a whole face on an every day basis," she said. "It also helps that you can kind of see or determine which path you'd like to go down in your career by interacting with a number of different people that work for a CVB or DMO. Just be open!"



Marcus Carney

Carney, 30, is Director of Visitors Experience at the Tacoma bureau. He has been with the CVB for four years, having previously worked for the Oak Harbor (Wash.) Chamber of Commerce.

"Being selected last year as a representative of the future of our industry has been incredibly exciting," said Carney, whose stepfather is Cole Carley, the longtime President & CEO of the Fargo-Moorehead (Minn.) CVB who retired in 2012.

"I have found incredible peers in our industry that I can bounce ideas off of, trust as honest voices, and become personal friends with. I took programs, thoughts, and processes into our daily operations in Tacoma from hearing some of our industry's brightest share their ideas," he added.

A graduate of the University of South Carolina who majored in tourism management, Carney said he's been "lucky to be involved with DMAI" for years. "I interned there, and I've been excited about the opportunities DMAI always presents," said the board volunteer for Helping Hands for the Disabled. "It's a good opportunity for me to give back to the organization."

When USAE asked what he thinks the most important lesson is for 30 Under 30 honorees, Carney said, "Don't be intimidated, don't be shy, and don't let this opportunity pass you by."

"Know that each of your fellow 30 Under 30 honorees are going through the same thing as you, the participants in prior programs are happy and excited to work with you," he said. "Most importantly, our industry is a welcoming one, use this honor as an opener to talk with our industries best and brightest that will be sitting in each of the sessions with you. Oh, and don't get caught up in Vegas—make it to the sessions."

Secret Service Warns Hoteliers on Computer Breaches

By Mike Santa Rita

The U.S. Secret Service is advising the hospitality industry to inspect computers made available to guests in hotel business centers, warning that thieves have been compromising hotel business center PCs with keystroke-logging malware in a bid to steal personal and financial data from guests.

In a nonpublic advisory delivered to companies in the hospitality industry on July 10, the Secret Service and the Department of Homeland Security's National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) warned that a task force recently arrested suspects who compromised computers within several major hotel business centers in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

"In some cases, the suspects used stolen credit cards to register as guests of the hotels; the actors would then access publicly available computers in the hotel business center, log into their Gmail accounts, and execute malicious key logging software," the advisory reads.

"The keylogger malware captured the keys struck by other hotel guests that used the business center computers, subsequently sending the information via email to the malicious actors' email accounts," the warning

continues. "The suspects were able to obtain large amounts of information including other guests' personally identifiable information (PII), log in credentials to bank, retirement and personal webmail accounts, as well as other sensitive data flowing through the business center's computers."

The advisory lists several basic recommendations for hotels to help secure public computers, such as limiting guest accounts to non-administrator accounts that do not have the ability to install or uninstall programs.

While there are a range of solutions designed to wipe a computer clean of any system changes after the completion of each user's session (Steady State, Clean Slate, et. al), most such security approaches can be defeated if users also are allowed to insert CDs or USB-based Flash drives.

Attackers with physical access to a system and the ability to reboot the computer can use CDs or USB drives to boot the machine straight into a standalone operating system like Linux that has the ability to add, delete, or modify files on the underlying (Windows) hard drive.

Some computers may have low-level "BIOS" settings that allow administrators to prevent users from booting another operating system from a USB drive or CD, not all computers support this option.

USAE Donates \$2,750 to DMAI Foundation

USAE weekly newspaper is making a \$2,750 donation to the DMAI Foundation from the proceeds of advertising in its July 22 edition honoring DMAI's "30 Under 30" honorees.

The ads came from 16 destination-marketing organizations. They congratulated the individual CVB employees who were given the "30 Under 30" award, which is co-sponsored by USAE and Searchwide. The actual awards were presented on July 21 at

the DMAI Annual Meeting in Las Vegas.

In making the gift to the DMAI Foundation, Anne Daly Heller, Executive Editor & Publisher of USAE, said the donation is an additional way for the paper to help enhance the future of the destination-marketing community.

"A healthy, future-looking DMAI is so important to the association community and the meetings industry," she said. "We are pleased to make this modest contribution."

USAE & SearchWide congratulate the 2014 "30 Under 30" honorees

Katie Bishop
Leroy Bridges
Mary Brooks
Erin Brousseau
Schuyler D. Bull
Kimberly Corbets
Amanda Eckelbarger
Jessica Fredrickson
Joe Giessler
Brandon Hall
Daniel Horsch
Lisa Huber
Elizabeth Huston
Cat Kessler
Eddie Kirsch

Jessica Leonard
Kat Lewis
Liz Mabe
Amos Orr
Kyle Sadewhite
Courtney Sculley
Shanna Smith
Ashley Steckel
Jen Valencic
Becca VanLandingham
Sky Wheeler
Brittany White
Cynthia Wildman
Kristin Wing
Aaron Wodin-Schwartz

Ambassadors: Marcus Carney and Gabrielle Dickson