



**HAPPY 2015!**

Here's to a sunny and bright new year! A special thank you to our hospitality community as we say hello to 2015 after a record-breaking year. It is a pleasure to work with each of you, and absorb your friendly warmth, enthusiasm and energy, as we focus on making a splash in the new year.

**SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 23**

**CVB OPEN HOUSE:** Please join us as we embark on a new year in our new offices. Come visit with the staff and enjoy light refreshments on Friday, January 23rd between 1-4pm at 101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 100, in downtown Fort Lauderdale. Enter the parking garage for the 101 Centre on NE 1 Street and parking will be validated only for this garage. Our offices are on the corner of NE 3 Avenue and NE 1 Street behind the Federal Courthouse. RSVP by January 20 to [flcvb@broward.org](mailto:flcvb@broward.org).

**NOVEMBER NUMBERS**

Growth in hotel occupancy continues (for the past 60 months) with the highest November occupancy rate and hotel daily rate in history!

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE AVERAGE HOTEL OCCUPANCY	
November 2014	November 2013
78.2%	75.9%
GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE AVERAGE HOTEL DAILY RATE	
November 2014	October 2013
\$120.95	\$114.67

**FINALLY, WE ALL DO: YOU ARE INVITED TO BE PART OF A HISTORIC WEDDING WITH PRIDE**

To mark the landmark announcement of marriage equality in Florida, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau is launching a "Love is Love" initiative to marry both LGBT and straight couples from across the nation in an historic collective wedding ceremony...and you're invited to be part of it. On Thursday, February 5, 100 couples (in and out of state) are invited to say "I Do" during a sunrise beach ceremony on Fort Lauderdale beach in front of the W Fort Lauderdale. All couples that tie the knot during the ceremony will receive a wedding gift and a commemorative wedding photo, plus other surprises...that's where you come in. If you would like to donate a wedding gift, whether it's a gift certificate, discount, or an actual gift, we will happily include in each couple's gift bag. On Tuesday, January 6, we will launch the [sunny.org/loveislove](http://sunny.org/loveislove) where couples can register to participate. If you are interested in donating, please contact Kim Canter by January 9 at [kcanter@broward.org](mailto:kcanter@broward.org) or 954-767-2445. We would like to receive the gifts no later than January 15.



**WINTER ACTIVATION IN BOSTON AND CHICAGO**

Unique opportunities for partners to participate in our winter activations. This year, we are preparing to warm up Boston and Chicago throughout the month of February. Hotel, restaurant and attraction partners who are interested in great major market media exposure and promoting the Greater Fort Lauderdale region should contact Kim [kcanter@broward.org](mailto:kcanter@broward.org) to provide prize packages or discounts.

**VALENTINE'S DAY**

To attract visitors looking for romance, we invite you to create special offers like spa treatments for two, wine pairings or other creative ideas. We will promote your romantic offers to national travel and lifestyle media. The offers will be featured on [sunny.org](http://sunny.org) and our Facebook and Twitter pages as well. Submit your offers under your partner login at [sunny.org/partnerlogin](http://sunny.org/partnerlogin). If you do not know your partner login, contact Kim at [kcanter@broward.org](mailto:kcanter@broward.org). When creating your coupons for your special offers, be sure to select the appropriate Valentine coupon category. If you have any questions, please contact Justin Flippen [jflippen@broward.org](mailto:jflippen@broward.org).



**2014 SUNSATIONAL SERVICE COURTESY AWARD WINNERS**

We salute your commitment to quality service - constant, consistent, and persistent. Congrats to the 2014 SUNSational Service Courtesy Award winners, pictured here with Nicki E. Grossman. Winners include (top left to right): Andres Castano; Gamett Reid; Michael Trotter, Jr.; Joejie Laxamana; Julio Enrique Pallares; (bottom left to right): First Row: Linda Levesque; Anabelle Alcantara; Kirstin Smith; Nicki E. Grossman; Richard Lauricello; Marie Rose Louis; Maggie Martino; Monique Patrick. [Click here](#) for more info.

**FLORIDA RESTAURANT AND LODGING ASSOCIATION BROWARD CHAPTER**

The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association's (FRLA) Broward Chapter announced the installation of new officers last month at the Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort. The 2015 FRLA Broward Board was honorably sworn in by Nicki Grossman. The 2015 officers are: 2015 President - Eduardo Fernandez, Sonesta Fort Lauderdale; 2017 President Elect - Andy Fox, Grille 401/Brimstone Properties; VP of Lodging - Ed Walls, Diplomat Resort & Spa; VP of Restaurants - Danielle Williams, Oceans 234; Treasurer - Donald Calder, InVision Strategies; Secretary - Geneve Dubois, Holland & Knight; and Immediate Past President - Kevin Speidel, Hilton Fort Lauderdale Marina.



**JANUARY GROUP SALES & SERVICES UPDATE**

Groups meeting in January will generate more than \$18.7 million to Broward County. Groups include:

- Jan 4-12: NRCMA 2015 Annual Meeting (700 attendees)
- Jan 9-16: MetLife 2015 National Wholesalers Meeting (335 attendees)
- Jan 9-16: The Westfield Group meeting (500 attendees)
- Jan 11-16: Florida Huddle (477 attendees)
- Jan 12-16: Wolters Kluwer Health meeting (350 attendees)
- Jan 15-26: Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition (1100 attendees)
- Jan 18-25: AIPLA 2015 Mid-Winter conference (2180 attendees)
- Jan 21-31 IndexUniverse 8th Annual Inside ETFs conference (308 attendees)
- Jan 29-Feb 5: Complete Conference Management Endovascular Therapy (727 attendees)

**WELCOME ABOARD**

The Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau is pleased to welcome our latest team member, **Jami Engebretson**, who has joined the Strategic Client Services Department. Jami has worked for a number of years in customer service (Dale Carnegie trained) including the Casa Moderna Miami Hotel & Spa and IHG properties in the Midwest.

**TOURISM SALES**



In December, Fernando Harb and Caitlan Etchevers traveled to Las Vegas for the Luxury Travel Exchange (LTX) & Expedia Partner Conference. LTX is one of the leading events for today's travel professional focused on the luxury and premium niche markets. At the Expedia Partner Conference, Travelocity, hotels.com, and hotwire discussed ideas to highlight our destination and keep our partners showcased with OTA'S.

Erick Garnica coordinated two inaugural flight events and press conferences last month, including Volaris, the low cost airline offering new nonstop service from Mexico City and Guadalajara; and the launch of the first U.S.-bound flight from Azul Brazilian Airlines into FLL, marking the low-cost carrier's launch of international service from Brazil. The team also hosted FAMs with Ecuador travel executives in partnership with TAME Airlines which initiated service Oct 17, Nordmanns Reiser-Norway in partnership with Norwegian Airlines, and travel executives in partnership with VISITFLORIDA/American Airlines from east and south China.

Justin Flippen toured the replica Spanish galleon Andaluca, which was in port at the Las Olas Marina prior to and for the Winterfest Boat Parade. The galleon was a part of the Sail to Sunny program and open for tours to the general public. Justin continues to represent the CVB on Broward 100, the year-long centennial celebration of Broward County's art of community. If you are interested in promoting your hotel, restaurant, attraction or venue as we celebrate Broward100, please contact Jody Leshinsky at the Broward Cultural Division at 954-357-7463 or [jleshinsky@broward.org](mailto:jleshinsky@broward.org). For more info on Broward100 and a full listing of sanctioned events, including the grand finale event - Duende, visit [Broward100.org](http://Broward100.org).



#### SNAPSHOT FROM THE UK OFFICE

The GFLCVB UK office is working to confirm co-op marketing partnerships with UK tour operators, America As You Like It, Tropical Sky and Barrhead Travel. The GFLCVB UK PR team is in the process of securing broadcast coverage with two of the UK's leading weekday breakfast television programs, Good Morning Britain and The Lorraine Show in early 2015. The team attended the annual Visit Florida Partners Meeting, providing an opportunity to network with key UK tour operators and media to discuss potential opportunities with Visit Florida in 2015.

#### SUBMIT YOUR SPECIAL OFFERS AND EVENTS ON SUNNY.ORG

As we continue to promote our destination, it is time to refresh and renew your special offers for Sunny.org, including LauderDeals, Cruise and Play and Latin American specials. For our hotel properties, attractions, and restaurants, we want to publicize your best value offers. Many offers that were originally listed had valid dates that have now expired or will be expiring soon. We invite you to submit your offers or resubmit your new valid dates and offer details under your partner login at [sunny.org/partnerlogin](http://sunny.org/partnerlogin). If you do not know your partner login, contact Kim at [kcanter@broward.org](mailto:kcanter@broward.org). When creating coupons for your special offers, be sure to select the appropriate coupon category (LauderDeals, Cruise and Play, Latin America, etc.). If you have any questions, please contact Justin Flippen [jflippen@broward.org](mailto:jflippen@broward.org). If you would like to submit an event taking place in Broward county for the sunny.org events calendar, go to [sunny.org/submit](http://sunny.org/submit) to input the details including location, dates, times, admission (if any), website, and event description. Be sure to select the applicable category for your event and also include a picture for your event or a photo of the venue at which your event is taking place. Your event submission will then be reviewed, and once approved it will be placed up on our online events calendar.

#### LGBT MARKET

Richard Gray will be visiting San Francisco January 6-8 for media and sales calls and then attending FITUR in Madrid January 26-30. In December, OutTraveler named Fort Lauderdale as the "Hottest US Gay Beach." This was the second top LGBT accolade for Greater Fort Lauderdale in 2014. A few months ago ManAboutWorld named Fort Lauderdale "Destination of the Year" in their Editors' Choice Awards.

#### 2015 GAY TRAVEL GUIDE

Our partners at the Greater Fort Lauderdale Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (GFLGLCC) are set to publish the 2015 Gay Travel Guide in January 2015. The guide will feature print and digital formats. New for 2015 include 200% Increase in Print Run; Top Things to do Lists; Expanded Maps; New out of market distribution points added in Philadelphia, Washington, DC, NYC, Fire Island, Chicago, Atlantic City and more. These guides have been extremely popular and are distributed internationally to LGBT leisure travelers, group and conference attendees. If you're looking to reach the ever-expanding LGBT market, we encourage you to participate and support the Gay Travel Guide. Advertising rates are very reasonable and all proceeds go to marketing and distribution. To learn more, please contact Jim Balarillo at 404-242-7793 or [jim@navigaytour.com](mailto:jim@navigaytour.com). Visit [www.gogayfortlauderdale.com](http://www.gogayfortlauderdale.com) or contact Keith Blackburn at 954-523-3500 or [Keith@gflgcc.org](mailto:Keith@gflgcc.org) to find out how your business can participate in this powerful market and benefit from over one million LGBT visitors to Greater Fort Lauderdale each year.

#### LGBT BUSINESS CONSULTING AND TRAINING PROGRAM

SunServe, the largest social service agency in Broward County for the LGBT Community, has created a new program: the Business Consulting and Training Program. They are the local experts in LGBTQ Cultural Proficiency Training, having conducted hundreds of trainings within the last 12 years. After a business successfully completes the training program, they become SunServe Certified and will be in alignment with Human Rights Campaign (HRC) standards. This means that their business will then receive a good housekeeping SunServe seal to place on their website, marketing material, and business cards. The business will also be placed on the website as a certified business partner. The ultimate goal for SunServe is to be able to train every business nationwide so that every LGBT community has the comfort of home no matter where they are.

#### VOTE FOR THE BEST GAYBORHOOD OF 2014

Please take a moment to vote for Wilton Manors as the best Gayborhood on GayCities website. [Click here](#) to vote. You do not need to register, just go to the link and click on GAYBORHOOD under VOTE and select Wilton Manors. Thanks for the support!

#### SPORTS LAUDERDALE

Sports Development welcomes more than 30,000 athletes, coaches, and families to Greater Fort Lauderdale in January, attending events such as: the Major League Soccer Combine at Central Broward Regional Park, Pro Footvolley Invitational in Lauderdale by the Sea, the Florida Lacrosse Classic in Weston, and the Triple Crown Girls Softball Nationals and Showcase in Davie/Plantation area.

#### OFFICE OF FILM, MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

Graceland Season 3 will begin pre-production this month and principal photography in March. **Film Permits were issued for the following productions in December 2014:** **TV Series:** Anglers & Appetites; Dangerous Lessons; Mission Makeover; New Money. **TV Commercials:** Ab Surfer; Beall's Department Store; Blackberry; Dodge; Gym Form Ab Booster; Gym Form Copper Wear; Huffly Bicycle; Pizza Hut. **Still Photography:** 5C Applesseeds; Belk December 2014; Bon Prix; Brown Giese Wedding; Cato Fashions; Cisco Security; Caravan Aircraft; G200 Aircraft; Harpers Bazaar Germany; Invokana; Maxim Inc.; Next; Novaxanthin. **Telenovelas:** Duenos del Paraiso; Tierra de Reyes; Volte Pa Que Te Enamores. **Documentaries:** Overcomers – The Web Series. **Music Videos:** Kat Dahlia – My Garden; Sophia del Carmen – Lipstick. **Industrial:** A World of Possibilities. **Web:** KidVision VPK; On Scripture. **Other:** belN Sports Holiday Promo; Mission Main Street Grants; Talkin' Money – Financial Literacy Educational Videos.

#### MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Greater Fort Lauderdale welcomes Church Benefits Association Planning and Board Meeting (Jan 18-21); New Golden Heights Church of Christ (Jan 18-24); National Urban League AOE Mid-Winter Meeting (Jan 19-23); Northwestern University Black Alumni Association (Jan 22-25); and American Tennis Association Executive Board meeting (Jan 23-25). Angella Lopez will represent Greater Fort Lauderdale at RCMA Emerge in Birmingham Jan 27-30.

The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB assisted the **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority** and the **Omega Psi Phi Fraternity** be part of history at the Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade last month. The Delta and Omega yacht followed the Grand Marshall Seminole Tribe yacht in a celebration of the 100th birthday of Broward County, one of the most culturally-diverse areas in the country today. These were the first African American organizations in a featured yacht. The participation of these two venerable Black Greek organizations also highlights the successful impact of multicultural tourism promoted by the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau (GFLCVB) where relationships are developed and nurtured to enhance the area's appeal as a top destination for influential African American groups.



#### HOTEL REFRESH

The B Ocean Fort Lauderdale is now officially **Sonesta Fort Lauderdale**, the first in Fort Lauderdale. The Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort, is now reflagged as the **B Ocean Resort in Fort Lauderdale**. **Beachwalk Resort** opens Spring 2015 along the Intracoastal Waterway in Hallandale Beach. Its beachfront sister property, **HYDE Resort** will feature 367 resort units with pool with sweeping ocean views, spa, restaurant and access to the shared new Beach Club located on Hollywood beach. The il Lugano is now the **Residence Inn By Marriott Fort Lauderdale Intracoastal**. The 290-room beachfront **Conrad Fort Lauderdale Resort and Residences** is undergoing more than \$34 million in upgrades including a Conrad Spa, swimming pool and exclusive oceanfront dining experience. Expected opening 2015. The Westin Diplomat Resort, was acquired by Thayer Lodging Group and reopened as the **Diplomat Resort & Spa Hollywood, Curio Collection by Hilton**, with \$100 million enhancement on tap. The new \$147 million, 349-room, **Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort** opens Summer 2015 on the Broadwalk as one of the first resorts to span the Intracoastal Waterway and the beach.

#### CONGRATS!

Congrats to **La Tasha McCutchen** from **3030 Ocean at the Fort Lauderdale Marriott Harbor Beach & Resort**, winner of the 13th season of Hell's Kitchen. La Tasha earned herself a Head Chef position at Gordon Ramsey Pub & Grill at Caesars Atlantic City.

#### GOOD EATS

The **Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino** unveils the new Asian-inspired **Kuro** in January featuring Chef Alex Becker, who brings his farm-fresh approach to this \$12 million, 240-seat restaurant overlooking the Hard Rock pool. The new **Marti's New River Bistro** at the **Broward Center for the Performing Arts** offers modern American cuisine with indoor and outdoor seating, and spectacular views for pre-theater dinners, post-theater desserts and weekend brunches. **Hoffman's Chocolates** is now open on Las Olas Blvd. Dania Beach's oldest waterfront eatery and watering hole reopens as **Historic Dockers Restaurant and Pub** in January, with coastal cuisine and craft beer. **Tilted Kilt Pub & Eatery**, a Celtic themed pub with high-end décor, opened in the heart of downtown Fort Lauderdale. The 8,500 square foot restaurant and bar is located near the corner of Las Olas Boulevard and Andrews Avenue, and is the largest sports bar in downtown Fort Lauderdale. The pub has an outside patio, exclusive parking lot and valet parking.

#### SHOPPING NEWS

The **Colonnade Outlets at Sawgrass Mills** has added first-in-market outlet locations from La Martina and The Webster to its already unparalleled mix of high-fashion luxury merchants. Zadig & Voltaire Outlet is scheduled to open during early 2015. **The Galleria** debuts Yellow Korner, a new art gallery from Paris that features original, limited edition photography by international artists.

#### HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Through Jan 25: AMALUNA presented by Cirque du Soleil, Sun Life Stadium  
Jan 7-15: The Lion King, Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan 8: Audra McDonald, Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan 8-Feb 1: Fully Committed, Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan 8: Intro to Burlesque, DanceMoves, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea  
Jan 9: Don Williams, Parker Playhouse  
Jan 10: 119th Big Cypress Anniversary Celebration, Seminole Tribe of Florida  
Jan 10-11: 2nd Annual Makers Square Faire, Museum of Discovery of Science  
Jan 11: Hillsboro Lighthouse Tour, Sands Harbor Resort & Marina  
Jan 14: Janis Siegel & Shelly Berg Trio "Jazz Meets Broadway" Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan 15: Florida Panthers vs. Colorado Avalanche, BB&T Center  
Jan 15: John Prine with Jason Wilber, Parker Playhouse  
Jan 16: Jonathan Biss, Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan 17: Florida Panthers vs. Edmonton Oilers, BB&T Center  
Jan 17: Riverwalk Stone Crab & Seafood Festival, Esplanade Park  
Jan 19: Florida Panthers vs. Vancouver Canucks, BB&T Center  
Jan 22: Concerts Under the Stars featuring the Young Artist Music Series, Bonnet House  
Jan 23: The Second City Hits Home, Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan 23-May 3: Brain: The World Inside Your Head, Museum of Discovery & Science  
Jan 24: David Bromberg Quintet, Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan 27: Florida Panthers vs. Detroit Red Wings, BB&T Center  
Jan 27-Feb 1: Potted Potter, Broward Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan 29: Florida Panthers vs. Columbus Blue Jackets, BB&T Center

Best wishes for a happy new year,



Nicki E. Grossman  
President

greater  
**FORT LAUDERDALE**  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU  
sunny.org