



FLORIDA ATTRACTIONS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 31 - June 3, 2026

TAMPA MARRIOTT WATER STREET

Program Schedule

rev. 05/25/2026 (subject to change)

THURSDAY, MAY 28, TO SATURDAY, MAY 30

Arrive early to enjoy the Tampa Marriott Water Street, and Tampa Bay area including area restaurants, shopping, and local attractions.

SUNDAY, MAY 31

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Networking Center Exhibitor Setup / Exhibitor Load-in
Silent Auction Setup

12:00 – 7:00 pm

FAA Conference Registration Open
(Sponsored by Welcome Guide-Map/CJ Publishers)

12:00 – 1:30 pm

Board of Directors Working Lunch
(Sponsored by Welcome Guide-Map/CJ Publishers)
for current FAA leadership only

2:30 – 4:00 pm

Mystery Connect - Live! – Ready to expand your network in record time?
(Sponsored by Integrated Insight)

Mystery Connect - Live! brings the energy of our popular monthly Mystery Connect to the Annual Conference floor. In this fast-paced, speed-dating-style session, you'll be paired with fellow FAA members for a series of brief, engaging conversations designed to spark new relationships and fresh ideas.

Make up to a dozen meaningful connections in one lively session — you never know who you'll meet or where the conversation might lead.

All evening events below sponsored by Visit Tampa Bay

5:00 – 6:15 pm

General Session #1 – State of the Industry Join a panel of senior attraction leaders for a timely conversation on the current state of our industry. From emerging trends and operational challenges to growth opportunities and innovation, these executives will share candid insights drawn from the front lines. Gain perspective on where we are today — and where the attractions industry is headed tomorrow.

6:15 – 7:45 pm

Opening Night Reception & Dinner in Networking Center
Official opening of the Networking Center. Exhibitors compete for awards. Silent Auction Opens.

MONDAY, JUNE 1

7:30 am – 3:30 pm

FAA Conference Registration Open

(Sponsored by Welcome Guide-Map/CJ Publishers)

7:30 – 8:30 am

Continental Breakfast in the Networking Center

Silent Auction Bidding

8:30 – 9:45 am

General Session #2 - Navigating the New Leisure Landscape: Insights from PGAV Destinations & Integrated Insight

(Sponsored by A3 Visual)

What happens when you combine deep consumer economics with powerful visitor motivation research? A clearer roadmap for 2026 and beyond.

In this dynamic joint session, Integrated Insight and PGAV bring complementary perspectives to the stage. Integrated Insight will unpack current spending intent, pricing perceptions, and the financial realities shaping participation decisions. PGAV will explore evolving visitor motivations, the rise of experience-seekers, generational shifts, and the growing demand for novelty and immersive design.

Together, these industry leaders will connect the dots between consumer caution and consumer curiosity — offering practical strategies to compete for time, attention, and discretionary dollars. This session will equip you with actionable insights to balance value, innovation, and sustainable growth in today's competitive attractions' environment.

9:45 – 10:15 am

Session Break in Networking Center

10:15 am – 11:30 am

Breakout Sessions #1 – five concurrent sessions

(Sponsored by Howes & Company – Project Managers)

- **Fueling Group Business Through Key Industry Partnerships**
- **AI in Action: Hiring Your First Digital Intern**
- **Your Best Content is Invisible: Why Organic Social Media is Failing Attractions**
- **Capitalizing on Your Culture with Those Pesky Core Values**
- **Back of the House, Front of Mind: How Operations and Marketing Work Together**

11:45 am – 1:30 pm

General Session #3 – Power Lunch

(Sponsored by SSA Group)

Surprise Arrival of the Gavel!

Don't blink — you won't want to miss this moment. The ceremonial Gavel makes its grand (and unexpected!) entrance as we celebrate the continued strength of the Florida Attractions Association.

FAA Annual Meeting

Join us for the official Annual Meeting of the Florida Attractions Association. This important session provides members with an update on the Association's progress, financial position, strategic priorities, and key initiatives shaping the year ahead. Primary Attraction Members will also participate in the election of leadership and celebrate the collective accomplishments that continue to strengthen and advance Florida's attractions industry.

Florida Attractions Scholarship Foundation Presentations

Join us as the Florida Attractions Scholarship Foundation proudly presents scholarship checks to the recipients of the 2026 Scholarship Awards and announces the recipients of the 2026 Professional Development Grants.

MONDAY, JUNE 1 CONT'D

11:45 am – 1:30 pm

General Session #3 – Power Lunch (continued)

(Sponsored by SSA Group)

Florida Attractions Leadership Academy – Inaugural Cohort

Join us as we recognize the participants of the inaugural cohort of the Florida Attractions Association Leadership Academy. This first class represents a new investment in developing the next generation of leaders for Florida's attractions industry, and we are proud to celebrate their commitment to growth, collaboration, and professional excellence.

VISIT FLORIDA Update

Bryan Griffin, President and CEO of VISIT FLORIDA, will provide an update on the organization's latest initiatives and strategic priorities. Hear his vision for Florida's tourism industry, along with insights into emerging travel trends, current research, and upcoming marketing campaigns and sales initiatives designed to drive visitation to Florida attractions statewide.

1:30 – 2:30 pm

Networking Center Visit, Dessert, Silent Auction Bidding

2:30 – 3:45 pm

General Session #4 - Epic Universe: Inside the Creation of the World's Most Advanced Theme Park

This is more than a theme park. It reflects a deliberate vision for the future of immersive entertainment.

As the first new theme park to open in Orlando in 25 years, Universal Epic Universe represents one of the most ambitious developments in the modern attractions industry. Designed as the cornerstone of a fully integrated vacation destination, it builds on decades of immersive storytelling experience to extend length of stay and deepen guest engagement.

Jeff Polk, Executive Vice President and General Manager of Epic Universe, will share insights from vision to opening day, including the strategic choices behind the audience-driven design, destination growth and leading transformation at scale.

4:00 – 4:45 pm

Peer Pods – Live!

Building on the success of FAA's Peer Pods program, **Peer Pods – Live!** brings this powerful networking experience to the Annual Conference. Designed for professionals who share similar primary job functions, these facilitated small-group sessions create space for candid conversation, shared challenges, and practical problem-solving.

Connect with industry colleagues who understand your day-to-day realities. Exchange ideas, explore solutions, and offer support in a collaborative environment built on trust and shared experience. Whether you're seeking fresh perspective or ready to share what's working in your organization, **Peer Pods – Live!** delivers meaningful connections that extend well beyond the conference.

6:30 – 9:00 pm

On Stage at ZooTampa at Lowry Park

Enjoy a special evening at the Zoo with tours, animal encounters, and a delicious dinner buffet -Motorcoach Transportation provided-

(Busses depart in front of the Hotel at 6:00pm, and arrive to ZooTampa at 6:30pm. Returning busses depart ZooTampa at 9:00pm and arrive to Hotel at 9:30pm)

TUESDAY, JUNE 2

7:30 am – 1:30 pm

FAA Conference Registration Open

(Sponsored by Welcome Guide-Map/CJ Publishers)

8:00 – 9:45 am

General Session #5 – Celebration Breakfast

- Industry Report Card – Amusement Advantage
- Florida AZA Presentation – Tim Tetzlaff, Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens
- FAA Advocacy Report – Jennifer Green – Liberty Partners of Tallahassee
- Celebrate FAA!
 - Chairman’s Annual Report
 - Installation of new Board and Officers for 2026-2027
 - Award Presentations (Outstanding Attraction & Associate Member)
 - Celebrating What’s New in Florida’s Attractions (Attraction members sharing their newest rides, facilities, habitats, programs, etc.)

9:45 – 10:00 am

Session Break

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Industry Roundtables Sessions – 3 rotations

(Sponsored by BlackDog Advertising)

One of the most popular and interactive elements of the FAA Annual Conference returns with a refreshed format designed to put the conversation squarely in the hands of participants.

Industry Roundtables bring together small groups of colleagues to discuss timely **topics** facing Florida’s attractions industry. Each table is moderated by a facilitator who will guide the conversation with thought-provoking questions designed to spark ideas, share experiences, and explore solutions.

Participants will rotate through three 30-minute sessions, connecting with peers across the industry while exchanging insights, challenges, and best practices. Whether you’re seeking new perspectives, practical ideas, or simply the chance to connect with colleagues facing similar challenges, Industry Roundtables provide a valuable opportunity for meaningful peer-to-peer learning.

Topics subject to change

- **Maximizing Your FAA Membership**
- **Ways to Improve the Guest Experience**
- **Professional Development Think Tank**
- **Issues and Answers with Liberty Partners**
- **Legal Landmines**
- **Your VISIT FLORIDA Partnership**
- **F&B Wins, Lessons, and Innovations**
- **New Audiences, New Revenue**
- **Building a Culture of Hospitality**
- **Scroll-Stopping Social Media**
- **AI Show and Tell**

12:00 – 1:20 pm

Buffet Lunch in the Networking Center

(Sponsored by accesso)

Final Session with Networking center Exhibitors

1:20 pm

Silent Auction Closes

Going, Going, Gone!

TUESDAY, JUNE 2 CONT'D

1:30 – 2:45 pm

Breakout Sessions #2 – five concurrent sessions

- **Turning Social Engagements into Real-World Visits**
- **Data to Decisions: Using What You Track to Drive Growth**
- **From Roadside Stop to Destination: How Family-Owned Attractions Find Success**
- **Florida Attractions Workforce Development: The Bridge to Higher Education**
- **Side Roads to Success: Alternative Revenue for Attractions**

2:45 – 3:00 pm

Session Break

3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

General Session #6 – Keynote Speaker: Alex Sheen – Because I Said I Would

(Sponsored by VISIT FLORIDA)

In an industry built on delivering unforgettable experiences, our promises matter. Alex Sheen, founder of the social movement Because I Said I Would, brings a powerful message about commitment, accountability, and the impact of keeping your word.

For Florida attractions professionals, Alex's message resonates deeply. Every ticket sold is a promise of value. Every marketing campaign is a promise of experience. Every team commitment is a promise to colleagues and guests alike. In a time when consumers are more selective and expectations are higher than ever, trust and follow-through are competitive advantages.

Through compelling stories and practical insights, Alex will challenge us to examine how we show up for our teams, our partners, and our guests — and how a culture of accountability can elevate performance, strengthen leadership, and reinforce the integrity of your organization.

This keynote will inspire you to lead with intention, deliver with consistency, and remember that in our business, promises kept create loyalty that lasts.

4:15 pm – Adjournment

Conference Finale

Passing of the Gavel, Chairman's Remarks, Grand Prize Drawings.

Adjournment – 5:30 pm

Silent Auction Check Out Networking Center Available for Exhibit Breakdown

6:30 – 9:00 pm

On-Stage at The Florida Aquarium

Enjoy tour, activities, and dinner buffet. Located in downtown Tampa, a short walk from the Hotel or enjoy a trolley ride.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

AM

Hotel Checkout / or extend stay and enjoy the Tampa Bay area

Back of the House Tours (limited capacity)

Go beyond the guest experience and step behind the scenes. Tampa-area attractions invite you for an exclusive look at their "back of the house" operations — the places, people, and processes that bring their unique magic to life each day.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3 CONT'D

Back of the House Tours (limited capacity) (continued)

From operations and maintenance to guest services, animal care, technical production, and more, these guided tours offer a rare opportunity to see how leading attractions execute excellence behind the curtain. Discover best practices, spark new ideas, and gain insights you can bring back to your own organization. (limited capacity)

Busch Gardens Tampa Bay

ZooTampa at Lowry Park

The Florida Aquarium (boat tours available)