



September 28, 2023

**ALERT - Additional Customs and Border Protection Officers Needed at MCO. We Need Your Help!**



Orlando International Airport (MCO) was fortunate to bounce back from the pandemic at an accelerated pace, remaining amongst the busiest airports in the

nation with over **55 million annual passengers as of July 2023**. Additionally, in 2022, **MCO welcomed over 1.4 million international passengers from key markets like Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and UK**. Overall, international flights at MCO represents approximately **\$5.5 Billion in economic impact** to the region generating over ten-thousand jobs.

However, this maybe in jeopardy after the of **Customs and Border Protection (CBP) recently proposed scaling back hours of operation due to limited staffing at the airport**. As a result, operations at MCO could suffer significant consequences and our region could experience economic loss due to the reduced international travel to our region.

Therefore, as a member of the Central Florida tourism and hospitality industry, **we are requesting your assistance in submitting a letter the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that shares your concerns regarding these proposed hours of operation change. Furthermore, this situation can be avoided with increased staffing levels of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents at MCO.**

We are proud that Orlando is the premier leisure destination in the world. For this reason, it is crucial that CBP staffing at Orlando International Airport is elevated commensurate with MCO's passenger growth which is projected to be at 58 million passengers by end of 2023.

Below please find three different letter templates below addressed to **The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security**, that can be emailed in support of increasing the staffing levels.

**Please send emails to:**

- **Jeff Rezmovic – Deputy Chief Of Staff:**  
[jeffrey.a.rezmovic@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:jeffrey.a.rezmovic@hq.dhs.gov)
- **Kimberly O'Connor – Executive Secretary:**  
[kimberly.oconnor@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:kimberly.oconnor@hq.dhs.gov)
- **Diane J. Sabatino, Acting Executive Assistant Commissioner, Office of Field Operations:** [diane.j.sabatino@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:diane.j.sabatino@cbp.dhs.gov)

Also, please copy any correspondence to [vjaramillo@goaa.org](mailto:vjaramillo@goaa.org).

**Lodging Member Support Letter**

## Allied Member Support Letter

## Educational Institution Support Letter

If you have additional questions or concerns regarding this topic, please contact Tammie Watts, CFHLA Government Affairs Manager at [tammie.watts@cfhla.org](mailto:tammie.watts@cfhla.org).

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## Next Orange County Board of County Commissioners TDT Meeting, Tuesday, October 3rd

Next week, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) will be hosting their next workshop on each of the five projects seeking Tourist Development Tax (TDT) funding on **Tuesday, October 3, 2023, from 9 am – 12:30 pm.**

Each project will have 15 minutes to present and then 15 minutes of questions and answers. Presentations will be made in rank order as follows:

- Orange County Convention Center
- Florida Citrus Sports Camping World Stadium
- Amway Center
- Dr. Phillip's Center for the Performing Arts
- UCF Sports

The presentations will also cover the following:

- Project Description
- Overall Project Cost
- Amount of TDT Funding Requested
- Components of the project to be funded by TDT, and other sources of project funding
- Economic Impact of the project
- Return on Investment of the project

Ultimately, CFHLA remains committed to advocating for **TDT funds to be properly reinvested into the economic engines that grow the hospitality industry and consistently produce a measurable return on investment to Orange County and its residents.**

Most importantly, this includes the **Orange County Convention Center, Camping World Stadium, the Amway Center and an increase in the Sports**

**Incentive Fund.** Utilizing the proper investment of TDT creates jobs, significantly increases the sales tax collection and makes our community a better place to live, work and play. We hope you can join us in support of these projects on October 3rd!



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## 2023 CFHLA PAC/PC Florida House, District 35 Endorsement



Today, the **Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association's (CFHLA) PAC and PC** announced its endorsement of **Erika Booth (R)** in the primary election for the open Florida House of Representatives, District 35 seat.

Currently a member of the Osceola County School Board, Ms. Booth is running in the upcoming special election to succeed former Rep. Fred Hawkins.

The Primary for the House District 35 Special Election will be held on **Tuesday, November 7, 2023.**



For the complete news release, please [CLICK HERE](#).

Also, as a reminder **CFHLA is proud to endorse and support the following candidates below who will also be on the November 7 ballot.**

The CFHLA PAC is proud to stand with each of these pro-hospitality candidates and we strongly encourage each of our members to do the same.

The Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association's (CFHLA) PAC and PC endorsed candidates for the 2023 Elections.

**ELECTION DAY**  
**NOVEMBER 7, 2023**

*Find Your Polling Location:*  
Orange County: [www.ocfelections.com](http://www.ocfelections.com)  
Osceola County: [www.voteosceola.com](http://www.voteosceola.com)  
Seminole County: [www.voteseminole.org](http://www.voteseminole.org)

**Mayor, City of Orlando**

 **Buddy Dyer**  
Mayor, City of Orlando

**Orlando City Commission**

 **Tony Ortiz**  
City Commissioner, District 2

 **Patty Sheehan**  
City Commissioner, District 4

 **Bakari F. Burns**  
City Commissioner, District 6

**Florida House of Representatives**

 **Erika Booth**  
Florida House, District 35

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## ICYMI - Central Florida Tourism Calculator Highlights Economic Impacts of the Travel & Tourism Industry

In case you missed it, last month [Visit Orlando](#), [Experience Kissimmee](#), [Seminole County](#) and [Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association](#) released new research by Tourism Economics which concluded that the Orange County, Osceola County and Seminole County's travel and tourism industry generated a new all-time high total economic impact of **\$87.6 billion**, a

**31% increase over 2021.**

Tourism Economics is an Oxford Economics company focused on combining an understanding of the travel sector with proven economic tools. More than 500 companies, associations, and destinations work with Tourism Economics every year as a research partner. Oxford Economics is one of the world's foremost independent global advisory firms, providing reports, forecasts and analytical tools on 200 countries, 100 industrial sectors and over 3,000 cities.

Also, according to the report, in 2022:

- Visitor spending jumped by **38% to \$55.5 billion**
- More than **\$26 billion in wages and benefits** were paid to the hospitality workforce, which is a substantial increase year over year
- State and local taxes collected from visitor activity **increased by \$900 million, reaching \$6.2 billion, which was an increase of 17% over 2021**

[CLICK HERE](#) to check out the Economic Impact of Tourism Calculator.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the full announcement.

# THE IMPACT OF TRAVEL

When people visit Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties,  
our entire community benefits.

Tourism saves each household **\$7,500** in annual taxes.

## ANNUAL TOURISM TO CENTRAL FLORIDA

SUPPORTS  
**450,000**  
(37% of the workforce)



GENERATES  
**\$87.6 BILLION**  
in economic impact



PAYS  
**\$26.1 BILLION**  
in wages and benefits



PROVIDES  
**\$6.2 BILLION**  
in local and state taxes



### TAXES FROM TOURISM

HELP PAY FOR PROGRAMS IMPORTANT TO ALL FLORIDIANS:

ARTS & CULTURE



TEACHERS



INFRASTRUCTURE



FIREFIGHTERS



POLICE OFFICERS



## Governmental Affairs Committee



On Wednesday, September 20, the **CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee** met at **Walt Disney World's Boardwalk Resort** (Thank you, **Elizabeth Watkins and Leticia Adams**). This month's meeting focused on crafting our 2024 Legislative priorities in Tallahassee, and the committee had the opportunity to hear from several influential tourism and hospitality leaders from across the region and the state regarding the potential issues impacting our industry in 2024 and beyond.

Our guest speakers included **Samantha Padgett of FRLA**, **Leticia Adams of The Walt Disney Company**, **Melanie Becker of Universal Orlando Resort Resort**, **Sarah Nemes of SeaWorld Orlando** and **Chris Stewart of the American Resort Development Association (ARDA)**.

The 2024 Florida Legislative Session is scheduled to begin on **January 9, 2024** and we look forward to finalizing these priorities before the end of the year. Our next Governmental Affairs meeting will be held on October 18th at **Universal Orlando Resort** and we look forward to hearing from **Orange County Comptroller, Phil Diamond**.



## Regional Tourist Development Tax Update

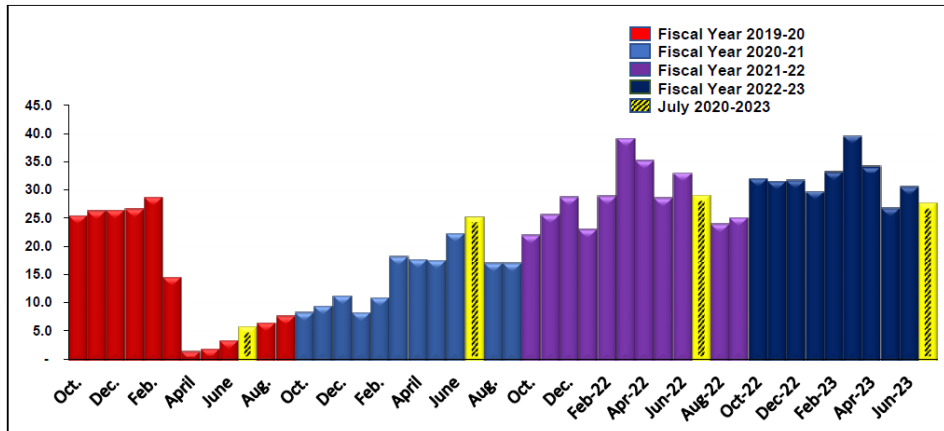
### Orange County

The Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collections received by Orange County for the month of **July 2023** were **\$27,171,000**. That is a **5.2% decrease** compared to July 2022.

This is the fourth month in a row that saw a year-over-year decrease.

Compared to last month, **July collections were lower than June collections by \$2.9 million**. However, **July Collections were higher than July 2021** collections by \$2.5 million.

The chart below shows monthly TDT collections for the current fiscal year and the previous three fiscal years.



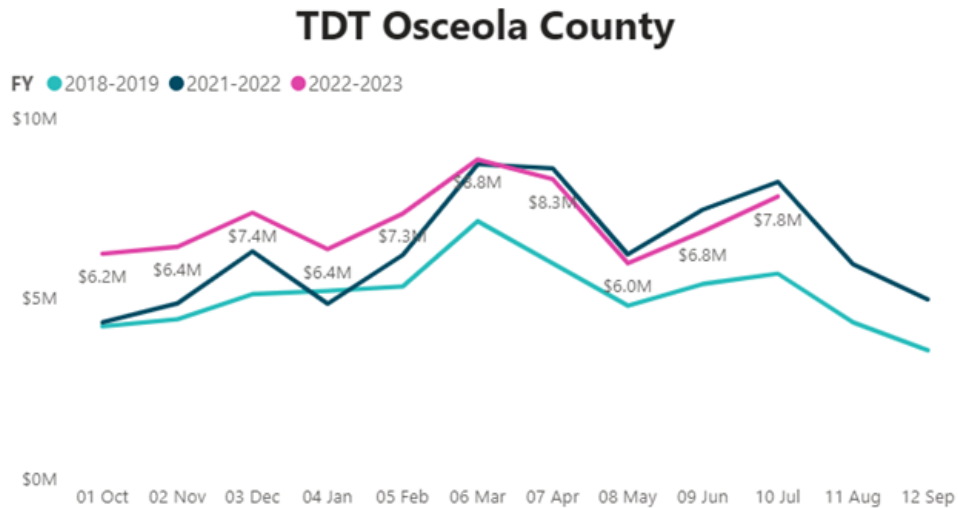


## Osceola County

The Osceola County Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collection for the month of **July was \$7.8 million, a decrease of 5% vs. July 2022.**

This year's July totals were 38% more than July 2019 and were the second highest July TDT ever.

Hotel TDT increased 8% year-over-year, contrasted by an 11% decrease in vacation home TDT.

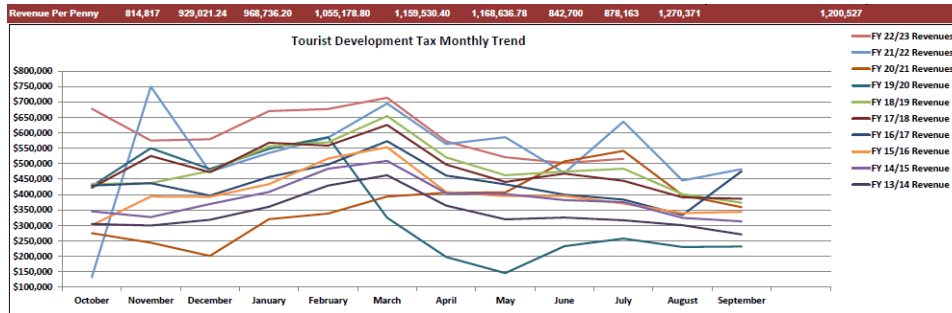


## Seminole County

Seminole County announced that the **Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collection for the month of July was at \$515,702.**

Month over month, this broke a streak of three consecutive months of a decline, **and this was the second highest July TDT collection for Seminole County history.**

For the FY 2022-2023, **Seminole County has now collected \$6,002,636 in TDT.**



## DONATE

CFHLA MEMBERS - Please **consider making a donation of \$50** via the link below to the CFHLA PAC/PC. All contributions help CFHLA expand its efforts to support and endorse Hospitality-Friendly candidates for local and state offices. **In the 2022 General election, all 16 CFHLA endorsed candidates were successfully elected into office.**

[DONATE NOW](#)

As a reminder, all CFHLA Board Members, PAC/PC Board Members, and ARC Board Members have committed to contributing \$150 to the CFHLA PAC/PC in 2023. If you are a part of one or more of these groups, please consider fulfilling your commitment today.

## IN THE NEWS

[Central Florida tourism industry an \\$87.6B economic impact engine, study says](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[USA Fencing to host Olympic qualifying event in Orlando](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[Guest view: Optimize tourism development tax expenditures for Orange County's economic growth](#) - Orlando Sentinel

[Orlando Health lands naming rights for airport Brightline station](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[Caribe Royale Orlando Resort near Walt Disney World shares peek at high-tech sports venue, Stadium Club](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[CFHLA'S 2023 Patriot Day Remembrance Breakfast Honors Local First Responders](#) - Florida National News

[Orange County hotel tax revenue drops in July 2023](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[How much hotel tax revenue Epic Universe theme park may help generate](#) - WFTV

[Bankruptcy results in Orlando hotel near SeaWorld changing hands](#) - GrowthSpotter

[Breeze Airways from Cottonwood Heights, Utah, announces new Orlando flights to Plattsburgh in upstate New York](#) - Orlando Business Journal

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About CFHLA

6675 Westwood Blvd #210, Orlando, FL 32821

The mission of the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association is to represent the Central Florida Hospitality Industry, by setting the standard of excellence through advocacy, collaboration, education, recognition, and service.