



April 26, 2024

A dark-themed advertisement for Withum's Hotel Services Group. The background is a blurred image of a hotel lobby with warm lighting. In the bottom right corner, there is a close-up of a brass bell. A teal cross-shaped logo is positioned in the top right corner. The text 'Elevate Excellence' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, a paragraph of text in a smaller white font reads: 'Withum's Hotel Services Group recognizes the importance of quality, world class service and is dedicated as your trusted partner to provide accounting and advisory services.' A white button with the text 'LEARN MORE' is located below the paragraph. At the bottom left, the URL 'withum.com/hospitality' is written in a teal font.

2024 CFHLA Hob Nob

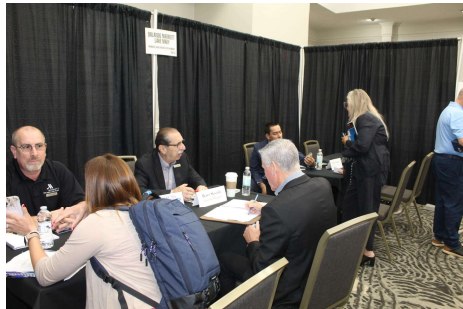
On Wednesday, April 24th, CFHLA hosted our annual **Hob Nob** at the [DoubleTree by Hilton at the Entrance to Universal Orlando](#) (Thank You, **Jason Lopez, General Manager**).



This year's Reverse Tradeshow was **our largest attendance to date, with nearly 400 CFHLA Allied and Lodging Members**, who had the opportunity to meet one-on-one for numerous three-minute "speed meetings" throughout the morning.

Thank you again to all of our sponsors, members, and the representatives from the 73 properties who supported us for this fantastic annual networking event!

Plus, we appreciate our CFHLA Member [Carousel's](#) for providing delicious soft-serve icy swirls to all of our participants!





CFHLA would like to acknowledge and thank our 2024 corporate sponsors including:





Staff Pro
Workforce Solutions



[Click Here to View Photos
from Hob Nob](#)

UCF Peer Outreach Mentoring Program (POMP) Ceremony

CFHLA is proud to support the students at the [UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management](#). In addition to our annual scholarship opportunities, the CFHLA Foundation has made a multi-year commitment supporting this year's Career Fairs, and the school's **Peer Outreach Mentor Program (POMP)**. POMP is an award-winning program where upper-classmen mentor new students and transfers who want to become more involved on campus and within the hospitality industry.

Last week, CFHLA attended the **POMP Annual Mentorship Ceremony** recognizing this year's outstanding mentors. Congratulations to the graduating seniors as they continue to grow their careers in the hospitality industry!



Valencia College Grand Buffet

Each semester, graduating students at [Valencia College's School of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management](#) get the opportunity to showcase their talents at the grand buffet.

Thank you, Valencia College, for the invitation to join family members and other community partners as we experienced their wonderful culinary skills and outstanding hospitality service provided by students!



Wekiva High School Caters Orange County School Board Meeting

This week, students from CFHLA's High School Outreach Partner, **Wekiva High School**, had the opportunity to cater lunch for the Orange County School Board Members and OCPS Administrators. The students from the **Wekiva Culinary Program** did a fantastic job showcasing their culinary skills and truly impressed everyone with their professionalism and outstanding service.



Thank you, **Chef Bates**, for your incredible leadership and unwavering commitment to your students! Additionally, we'd like to thank **Orange County School Board Member Melissa Byrd, District 7**, for the opportunity to share CFHLA's long-standing commitment to Wekiva, as well as the other high schools in the area, in front of the entire Orange County School Board.



Metro Orlando Boy Scouts Recognize Hospitality Community Leaders at Golden Eagle Dinner

On Tuesday, April 23rd, CFHLA Members attended the **2024 Metro Orlando Boy Scouts of America Golden Eagle Dinner** where **Terry Prather** of LIFT Orlando, and Board Chair of [Visit Orlando](#), was recognized as the 2024 Golden Eagle Honoree and **Carolyn Fennell**, formerly of [GOAA - Greater Orlando Aviation Authority](#), received the 2024 Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award Honoree.

Thank you to all of the CFHLA Members and partners who joined us to celebrate the recognition of these outstanding community leaders!



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"Members Doing Business with Members" - Evermore Resort and Canteen

Back in the Fall of 2022, CFHLA member **Rene Smilek, Director of Resort Operations**, connected with **Steve Nelson, Regional Vice President of [Canteen](#)** about creating a market style, 24/7-365 breakroom and meal program for the resort's employees. Together the vision became a reality that now serves more than 500 employees at the [Evermore Resort](#).

This led to another opportunity when Evermore's **Director of Food & Beverage, David Katz**, wanted to find a coffee partner that was unique, high quality, and with a cause. Evermore again partnered with Canteen and selected [Change Please Coffee](#), a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 2015 with the mission to "end homelessness through coffee," as the resort's coffee provider.

Change Please invests 100% of its profits to lift people out of homelessness through job training and employment in the hospitality industry. With in-demand coffee barista and customer service skills, a competitive wage, and supportive wrap-around care, trainees can become self-sufficient, independent, and re-engaged in their communities. Change Please is working to establish its next location in the Central Florida / Orlando metropolitan area.

If you would like to learn more or set up a coffee tasting, please reach out to [Steve Nelson](#) with Canteen for more information.





Congratulations to DOP's Golden Brick Award Winners

CFHLA is thrilled to announce and congratulate the outstanding CFHLA members who were honored this week with the [Downtown Orlando Partnership \(DOP\) Golden Brick Awards](#) for 2023.

Here are the CFHLA member award recipients:

- **Downtowner of the Year:** Jason Siegel, [Greater Orlando Sports Commission](#)
- **Arts & Culture:** [Orlando Pride](#) Highway Women Kit
- **Commercial Development:** [Orlando Health](#) Jewett Orthopedic Institute
- **Public Works & Placemaking:** [Visit Orlando](#) & Orlando Economic Partnership for their "Unbelievably Real" Mural for #407DAY
- **Redesign & Renovation:** Altira Pool + Lounge at the [Grand Bohemian Hotel Orlando](#)

These awards are a testament to the dedication and hard work of our members in shaping the landscape of Downtown Orlando and creating memorable experiences for residents and visitors alike. We are proud to celebrate their achievements and contributions to the growth and success of the hospitality industry.

Once again, congratulations to all the winners! Your achievements inspire us all.



Florida Tops List for Sports Tourism Economic Impact in 2023

CFHLA is thrilled to announce that Florida has claimed the prestigious title of the **No. 1 state for economic impact generated by sports tourism in 2023!** This remarkable achievement marks the first time ever that Florida has secured the top spot on this esteemed list.

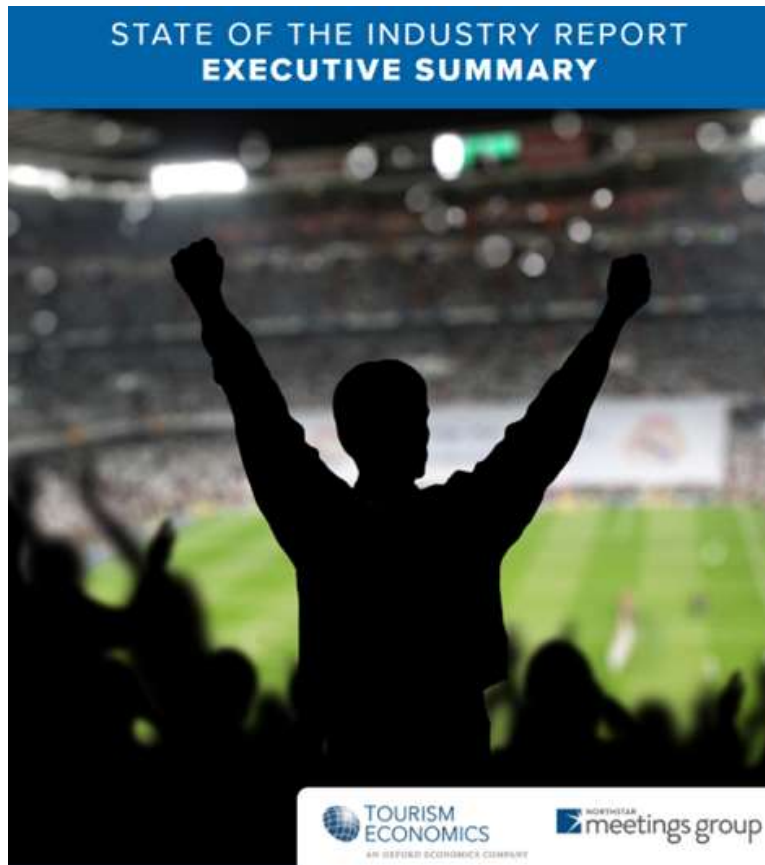
The accolade comes from the **Sports ETA State of the Industry Report**, which has unveiled its Top 10 states in terms of economic impact generated by sports tourism for the year 2023. The ranking analysis utilized data provided by sports tourism industry stakeholders and economic data, showcasing the significant contributions of sports tourism to our state's economy.

According to the report, the sports tourism sector made a monumental contribution to Florida's economy, with a direct spending impact of **\$52.2 billion**, resulting in a total economic impact of **\$128 billion**. This substantial influx of revenue supported a staggering **757,600 full-time and part-time jobs across various sectors**, illustrating the widespread benefits of sports tourism to our communities. Furthermore, the economic impact generated by sports tourism in Florida contributed **\$20.1 billion in taxes** to various sectors of the economy, further fueling growth and development across the state.

It's important to note that sports tourism marketing funds and other initiatives, such as bid fees and local grants, play a crucial role in influencing how states perform in the realm of sports tourism. The success of Florida in securing the top spot is a testament to the collective efforts of industry stakeholders,

government bodies, and community partners in promoting our state as a premier destination for sports events and tournaments.

As we celebrate this remarkable achievement, let us continue to collaborate and innovate to further enhance Florida's position as a premier destination for sports tourism, driving economic growth and prosperity for years to come.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR
APRIL MEMBERS OF THE MONTH**



Greg Burnes

[Hampton Inn & Suites Orlando
Airport at Gateway Village](#)



Cindy Traenkner

[Domino's](#)

MEET THE SILVER



Did You Know... [Duct Detectives](#) participates in the Annual Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Associations Adopt-A-Station event on September 11th.

UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information on upcoming events, or to register, just click on the button below.

- [Engineers Council Board Meeting \(5/2/2024\)](#)
- [2024 Engineers' Council Clay Shooting Tournament \(5/3/2024\)](#)

[Click Here to View
Upcoming](#)

JOB OPENINGS

Check out the latest hospitality employment opportunities in Central Florida.

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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.