



**February 7, 2025**

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### State of Hospitality & Tourism Explores Industry Trends



On Thursday, CFHLA partnered with [CareerSource Central Florida](#) and [STR](#) to host our second annual State of Hospitality & Tourism at the [Caribe Royale Orlando](#) (Thank you, **Amaury Piedra**, Managing Director).

With more than 350 in attendance, this regional economic forum brought together industry and community leaders, elected officials and news media for an in-depth analysis of the current economic impact, market and workforce trends (including recently updated wages, benefits, demographics, etc.), and share local forecasts for the Central Florida hospitality and tourism industry.

The event featured presentations by **Nilda Blanco**, Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives with CareerSource Central Florida, and **Isaac Collazo**, Vice President of Analytics with STR.

Here are the top five key takeaways:

- As the largest employer in our region, **nearly 80% of all Central Florida's occupations are now tied to the leisure and tourism industry**. This is a significant opportunity to challenge how we look at careers in the industry and highlight different career paths and non-traditional roles.
- Contrary to some perceptions, **90% of job postings are for full-time roles within the industry**, which has created numerous opportunities for long-term career paths.
- The industry's wages are very competitive and a launchpad for career advancement. **The average entry level wage within the Central Florida hotel and lodging industry is \$39,000, which is well above the average Central Florida entry level wage of \$31,000.**

Many positions come with competitive wages, benefits and clear pathways for professional development.

- Data shows the market is strong in Central Florida but **still recovering from the peak level of visitors staying at our properties in 2019**.
- There is cautious optimism that **2025 will have stronger demand and growth than 2024**, with the opening of new attractions, accommodations, etc.



Thank you to everyone who attended this informative event and we hope that you gained valuable insights and data to use in your daily operations. We look forward to continuing in the spirit of collaboration with our community partners, to strengthen the future outlook of the Central Florida hospitality and tourism industry.

**CFHLA would also like to thank our State of Hospitality & Tourism Corporate Sponsors:**



**And thanks to our In-Kind Partners:**



**More State of Hospitality  
& Tourism Photos**

**CFHLA Foundation Awards \$25,000 in Grants to Support Students' Career Development**

At Thursday's annual State of Hospitality & Tourism, the [CFHLA Foundation](#) was proud to distribute \$25,000 in grants to three local organizations who are empowering students to develop their careers.

The CFHLA Foundation awarded a \$5,000 grant to [CareerSource Central Florida](#) to support its 2025 CareerSource Central Florida Summer Youth Program, so 1,500 Central Florida High School students can explore career opportunities. The CFHLA Foundation also granted \$15,000 to [UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management](#) to help fund its two annual career fairs and create the P.O.M.P. Fund by CFHLA, which provides early support and mentorship to all first semester college students and it has resulted in success.

Lastly, the CFHLA Foundation gave a \$5,000 grant to support [Seminole State College's](#) Hospitality and Tourism Management Program. The donation will help operate the program's food trailer, an innovative classroom on wheels for culinary students.

CFHLA is dedicated to helping Central Florida students develop hospitality and culinary careers, and we thank our partners for their commitments to this important mission!





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## Leadership Development Series Seminar #1



CFHLA's first Leadership Development Seminar of 2025 was a major success. This week, more than 60 hospitality professionals attended our first seminar, which focused on leadership and management essentials, such as balancing daily operations with strategic planning. Thank you to **Tom Drury, General Manager, [Drury Plaza Hotel Lake Buena Vista](#)** for hosting this educational seminar.

Attendees also learned more about career transitions from peer to supervisor and manager to leader, emphasizing leadership styles and their influence on team dynamics. Additionally, the session helped participants develop skills to build strong interpersonal relationships, master time management, active listening and conflict resolution.

Lastly, thanks to Dr. Fevzi Okumus with [Rosen College of Hospitality Management](#) and CFHLA Treasurer Ally Martin, General Manager, [Hyatt House Orlando Airport](#) for their presentations. We look forward to the remaining [Leadership Development Series](#) seminars throughout the year, which are designed to help grow the leadership skills of our industry professionals and advance their careers!



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## Registration Opens Soon for St. Patrick's Day Golf Open

Registration opens next week for our 2025 [St. Patrick's Day Golf Open](#). This CFHLA signature golf event will be played this year on **Thursday, March 13, 2025** at [Mission Resort + Club](#) located at Howey-in-the-Hills, FL. The price is \$375 per player with a 7:45 AM shot gun start.

Registration for VIP Members opens on **Tuesday, February 11 at 9:00 am.** Registration for Silver Partner Members opens **Tuesday, February 11 at 1:30 pm.** Registration for All Members opens **Wednesday, February 12 at 9:00 am.**

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

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## Register Now for the Golden Pineapple Awards

Register now for our annual [Golden Pineapple Awards](#), scheduled for **Thursday, February 27, 2025** at the [Orlando World Center Marriott](#) from 5:30 PM to 9:30 PM.

This CFHLA signature reception and dinner awards program recognizes Front Line / Hourly / Non-Supervisory / Non-Management employees for their exceptional dedication and success to create amazing guest experiences throughout the year and to inspire their colleagues!

Tickets cost \$95 per person or \$950 for a table of ten. For more information, please contact Faith Moore at [faith.moore@cfhla.org](mailto:faith.moore@cfhla.org)

[CLICK HERE](#) to register.



CFHLA PRESENTS  
**GOLDEN PINEAPPLE AWARDS**

Thursday, February 27, 2025 5:30 PM - 9:30 PM  
Orlando World Center Marriott  
8701 World Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32821

\$95 Per Person	\$950 Table of 10	Complimentary Self-Parking
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Presenting Sponsor:



Corporate Sponsors:



Electrical Partner:



**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**

Registration to Close February 17, 2025

For more information, please contact Faith Moore  
at [faith.moore@cfhla.org](mailto:faith.moore@cfhla.org)



## Housekeeping Council Offers Training at Crown Linen





The CFHLA Housekeeping Council held a laundry training day on Wednesday at our CFHLA Member Business, [Crown Linen, LLC](#). Thanks again to Chad Rocheford and the Crown Linen team for hosting, as well as the other CFHLA Members who supported this training including [Ecolab](#), [JENSEN USA](#) and [Standard Textile Co.](#) More than 25 people toured the large facility, attended sessions to learn more about the commercial laundry service business and networked among industry professionals. They also observed how Crown Linen specializes in energy efficient, environmentally friendly handling of luxury towels, sheets and textiles.

Thank you again to the Housekeeping Council and **Council Chair Firat Yuregir** with [Bluegreen Vacations- The Fountains Resort](#), for your leadership to help these essential hospitality employees learn new skills and grow their educational training within their careers.

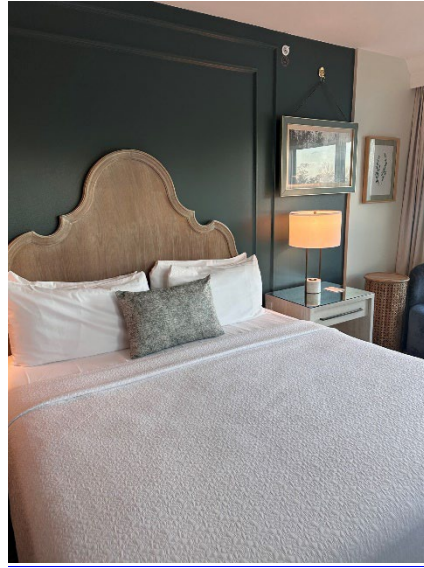


## The Inn at Celebration, Autograph Collection Hosts Grand Opening



Congratulations to our CFHLA Lodging Member [The Inn at Celebration](#) on their official grand opening! After completing a multi-million dollar renovation project to its 115 room hotel in the heart of Celebration's village. Several of our hospitality leaders, community partners and members were excited to see the impressive updates Thursday and to join in the hotel's Grand Opening.

The renovated property now features updated guest rooms, enhanced dining experiences, updated meeting areas, and even a new name. The Inn is now called [The Inn at Celebration, Autograph Collection](#). Congratulations again to the entire team on this momentous occasion!



**CLICK HERE TO  
PURCHASE BODY AD**



## Partners in Action - Millenia Gardens Elementary Students Harvest Lettuce for SeaWorld Manatees



Here's a fun story about one of our Partners in Action! Students in the Eco Club at [Millenia Gardens Elementary School](#) recently harvested lettuce that was donated to the rescued manatees at [SeaWorld Orlando](#)! The elementary school has been a partner with SeaWorld Orlando in our in our [Adopt-A-School](#) Program for the last nine years.

Seven of the school's students recently visited SeaWorld for some job shadowing with the SeaWorld Orlando rescue team, and their field trip was free! Eco Club students will make an overnight field trip to SeaWorld this May to learn more about ocean animals.

Thanks again to the team at SeaWorld and all of our CFHLA partners, who make time to invest in our students through the **Adopt-A-School** program.

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## Partners in Action - Courtyard by Marriott Orlando East UCF Area Supports Awards at Camelot Elementary

And thanks to our Partners in Action at [Courtyard by Marriott Orlando East UCF Area](#) for their continuing support of the [Camelot Elementary School](#) Knights as part of our [Adopt-A-School](#) Program. Volunteers from the hotel recently brought food and offered discounts for students and parents taking part in the schools' recent Awards Night. The event made time to honor students with excellent academic scores.

Thanks again to the Courtyard by Marriott Orlando East UCF for getting involved in our community and for supporting academic success!





Camelot Elementary ...

55m · 🌐



Thanks to our Partner in Education: Courtyard Marriot for our treats and discount for parents and students for our awards night!



Cindy Marie + 4

Pro Bowl Scores a Touchdown for Local Economy

Congratulations to our partners at [Florida Citrus Sports](#) for hosting another fantastic event with the [NFL](#) 2025 Pro Bowl Games this past week at Camping World Stadium. More than 54,000 fans attended a weekend filled with games, competitions, a tug of war and much more. It all culminated with a flag football match up Sunday afternoon with the NFC defeating the AFC team for the third year in a row 76 to 63.

Economic experts say the Pro Bowl Games generate \$45 million in economic impact for Central Florida's economy as fans from around the country and world visit for the signature NFL event. We are proud to continue showing the world why we are the [#1](#) sports destination in the country!



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## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FEBRUARY MEMBERS OF THE MONTH

[Meet Our February Members of the Month](#)

CFHLA is proud to recognize our **Lodging Member of the Month** for February, **Barb Bowden, Area Manager** for [Loews Hotels](#) at Universal Orlando! Barb is an amazing champion for our organization and has served as an outstanding Chair of the Board in 2024! We are all grateful for Barb's strong leadership throughout the year and generous support by hosting our 2024 Hospitality Gala. Plus, her consistent participation at numerous CFHLA events has been essential for the success of our organization and industry!

We also proudly recognize our **Allied Member of the Month** for February, **Lexi Willaman, Account Executive** for [LandCare](#). Lexi combines amazing people skills with a positive attitude and a strong dedication to her work. She is an expert at building relationships with clients and delivering customer satisfaction. We are grateful for Lexi's outstanding involvement, participation, and phenomenal support as a Silver Partner Member!

To nominate a future CFHLA Allied and/or Lodging Member of the Month, please [CLICK HERE](#).



**Barb Bowden**



**Lexi Willaman**

[LandCare](#)

## MEET THE VIP



### Did You Know...

Steve Dobbins, Vice President with [Cortez Heating & Air](#), has been a member of CFHLA for over 20 years and understands the complexities of the hotel industry. Cortez provides HVAC service across the state of Florida for numerous hoteliers working closely with Management and Engineering to develop budgets and deliver expert service while implementing retrofit capabilities and fast response for all emergency mechanical breakdowns.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

- [St. Patrick's Day Golf Open Committee Meeting #1 \(2/10/2025\)](#)
- [Vacation Ownership Council Meeting \(2/11/2025\)](#)
- [CFHLA Executive Committee Meeting \(2/11/2025\)](#)
- [Wednesday AM Leads Group \(2/12/2025\)](#)
- [Wednesday Noon Leads Group \(2/12/2025\)](#)
- [Downtown Hoteliers Luncheon \(2/12/2025\)](#)
- [Engineers Council Board Meeting \(2/13/2025\)](#)
- [UCFUCF Area Hoteliers Luncheon \(2/18/2025\)](#)
- [CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors Meeting \(2/19/2025\)](#)

- [Seminole County Hoteliers Luncheon \(2/19/2025\)](#)

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[Click Here to View  
Upcoming](#)

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## JOB OPENINGS

Check out the latest hospitality employment opportunities in Central Florida.

[VIEW JOB POSTINGS](#)

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## CONNECT WITH CFHLA



[WWW.CFHLA.ORG](http://WWW.CFHLA.ORG)

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.