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CFHLA NAMES SARAH PANKO AS NEW COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING MANAGER

ORLANDO, Fla. (May 28, 2025) – Today, the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association (CFHLA) proudly announced the hiring of Sarah Panko as the new Communications and Marketing Manager, effective June 4, 2025.

Sarah brings more than a decade of experience in communications, media relations, and digital strategy. Most recently, she served as Deputy Communications Director for the City of Groveland, following her role as Public Information Manager for Groveland's Police and Fire Departments. She began her career in broadcast journalism, with roles at WRBL News 3 in Columbus, Georgia, where she served as a weekday Anchor and Producer, and later at Spectrum News 13 in Orlando, where she earned an Emmy nomination for team coverage of the Pulse nightclub tragedy. She was also recognized in *Lake & Sumter Style Magazine's* "40 Under 40" list. Sarah is a graduate of Marquette University, where she earned a double major in Broadcast Communications and Advertising, and she is pursuing her MBA.

Robert Agrusa, president and CEO of the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association expressed confidence that Sarah is ready for the challenges ahead by saying, "I believe Sarah's extensive work experience will allow for a smooth transition into this role and contribute greatly to CFHLA's long-term strategic initiatives, including advancing and elevating the hospitality industry throughout our community. Plus, her professional background positions her well to lead all of our communications objectives and strengthen our relationships within the hospitality industry and regional business community."

Sarah shared her enthusiasm for joining the association, stating, "It's an honor to join an organization as highly respected as CFHLA. I'm excited to support the region's hardworking hospitality professionals by amplifying their incredible stories, building meaningful connections, and advancing CFHLA's mission through innovative communication strategies."

The Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association's mission is to represent the Central Florida Hospitality Industry, by setting the standard of excellence through advocacy,

collaboration, education, recognition, and service. As the largest regional lodging association in the United States, CFHLA represents approximately 80 percent of the more than 129,500 hotel rooms throughout the Central Florida Region (including but not limited to Lake, Orange, Osceola, Polk and Seminole counties) and more than 500 "supplier" organizations that do business with the hospitality and tourism industries.

For more information on the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association, please visit www.cfhla.org.

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