



2022 Chairman's Annual Report

Dear Florida Attractions Association Friends,

Twenty years ago last month, a younger, inexperienced and somewhat naïve young woman stepped through the doors of an African safari park and began a career that would exceed her wildest expectations. Perhaps it was fate that drew her to become the public relations and marketing manager for an animal park. After all, she was an intern for another African-themed park six years earlier.

That young woman, was, of course, me. From being an intern at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay to serving as marketing manager at Lion Country Safari my career path would begin a trajectory that I could never have imagined.

My story isn't unique. In fact, it's a story we all share. *A trajectory that I could never have imagined* - hold that thought – I'll come back to it in a couple of minutes.

Last August, my good friend Matt Johnson, passed the historic FAA gavel to me, and a tradition that has been repeated through the decades continues, the solemn responsibility of Chairing the Board of Directors of the Florida Attractions Association.

This has been a transitional year for the FAA. As we all began the task of mentally slogging our way out of a worldwide pandemic, at the same time, managing shifting employee expectations and meeting our guests demands of their attraction experience. Quite a balancing act, and all as the traditional phrase "work-life balance" was rewritten to become "life-work balance."

For the FAA, we began rebuilding our membership base. While we lost nearly 20% of our members during the pandemic, we are coming back strong. In our last 3 Board of Directors meetings, a total of 25 new members joined or rejoined the FAA.

During the pandemic, FAA events and benefits were suspended as our staff and leaders worked to deliver timely information and work with city, county, state and federal governments to provide a clear, safe path for the reopening of Florida's attractions. Today, with the pandemic behind us and the virus now endemic, the FAA is back with all pre-Covid events and benefits in full operation.

Last fall saw the return of Networking Nights – all seven of them! A wonderful networking event providing our members with a relaxing evening of interacting with industry colleagues and renewing friendships.

Our IAAPA Networking Event shifting from a breakfast to a dinner last year and was a huge success as we filled a restaurant's private dining room with members of our FAA family.

Florida Attractions District Days provided us with the opportunity to open our attractions to members of our county's Legislative Delegation and share the positive impact our businesses make for our communities.

Florida Tourism Day in Tallahassee took on a whole new vibe as the event became more focused and directed at the issues facing our association and our friends in other hospitality associations. The immediate threat to VISIT FLORIDA is resolving while the risk to redirect our county's Tourism Development Tax dollars away from tourism promotion for use in non-tourism related uses is becoming more serious. The FAA is fortunate to be represented by Liberty Partners of Tallahassee. As our government relations advocate, Liberty Partners ensures the voice of Florida's attractions industry is heard in the halls of our state capitol.

Our industry's staffing condition last spring caused us to cancel our in-person Attraction Regional Forums. While we were able to meet in the immersive, interactive Gatherly platform, we missed the unique atmosphere created when attractions industry leaders gather in person.

As we moved from our pandemic-necessitated protocols, we were met with a new challenge - an acute scarcity in our hospitality workforce. Yesterday morning, we spent considerable time discussing our labor force dilemma. We all have a role to play to reestablish hospitality careers as rewarding and fulfilling.

This fall Floridians will hold elections for the entire Florida Cabinet, and due to decennial redistricting, all Congressional seats and the entire Florida House and Senate. It is imperative that Florida continues to be a business-friendly state, free of zealous bureaucratic and regulatory disfunction. Our Florida Attractions Political Action Committee will use the contributions you have already contributed to our PAC and will support tourism-friendly candidates.

I am extremely proud of the work we all do to support our Foundation. The Florida Attractions Scholarship Foundation is a unique benefit of membership. Our scholarship dollars are given exclusively to our member's employees and their dependents. This year, \$10,000 in scholarships were awarded, but imagine the futures we will impact as we continue to offer our financial resources to help grow and foster the next generation of hospitality industry leaders.

With that, we come full circle. From supporting tomorrow's leaders to those of us gathered here this morning. All sharing a common bond. We're all leaders. We're all servants. In our

careers, we have all experienced a trajectory we never could have imagined. How fortunate we are to have professions dependent on one common goal – to create lifelong memories, to inspire wonder and to elicit joy.

Thank you, my fellow FAA members, for providing me this opportunity to serve as your Chairman of the Board. It has been a distinct privilege and a high honor. A trajectory I never could have imagined and an honor I never will forget.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Berthiaume". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Jennifer Berthiaume
Chairman of the Board
June 14, 2022