As the pandemic rages on, passenger ships remain harbored at PortMiami. Cruise companies have canceled sailing plans through at least two-plus years would see the port lose $285.5 million in revenue for the local economy, according to a press release. The program, which focuses on promoting Miami-Dade’s outdoor activities, beaches and national parks, was funded by a $5 million grant from the county. "MiamiDade," the release said, "promotes exploration of a vast array of outdoor adventures which include more than 200 parks located in Miami-Dade County, Everglades National Park, and Biscayne National Park. The GMCVB conducted an extensive advertising campaign with traditional and non-traditional content distributed through multiple media channels including on YouTube, digital/social ads, outdoor billboards, and cable TV ads, among other mediums.

TOURISM TRADE SHOW RETURNING: While online this year, Visit Florida intends to hold its next global trade showcase in-person in early 2022. With Florida’s hospitality and leisure industries facing a slow recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, the state’s tourism-marketing arm announced Monday that its “2022 Florida Huddle” will be held in January at the Tampa Convention Center. The show targets international and domestic travel agents, wholesalers and media. Visit Florida is working to widen its marketing during the coronavirus to the West Coast of the US, expanding earlier efforts that targeted travelers from East Coast cities who could drive or take short flights to Florida.

VACCINE PRE-REGISTRATION: After a week of frustration with issues of timing and technical difficulties in which thousands of Miami-Dade residents tried but couldn’t sign up for the Covid-19 vaccine, the county last week launched a pre-registration system so that seniors and healthcare workers can register anytime. Residents 65 or older and healthcare workers who work directly with patients are eligible for the first round of vaccine distribution. They or their loved ones can sign up to receive the vaccine by calling (305) 614-2014 or visiting MiamiDade.gov/vaccine.

PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCED: TSG – a South Florida boutique, diversified real estate development and investment company – and Lineaire Group – a Miami-based real estate investment and development firm focused on urban infill projects – have announced a partnership with Bridge Investment Group to develop Wynwo, a multifamily opportunity zone project for the Ombi neighborhood. The 20-story project on bonds will rise on at 1765 N Miami Ave. with 224 residential units, including 42 micro dwelling units. The project is set to break ground by the end of March.

In a cruise halt, port keeps its head above water

A week after Miami-Dade commissioners voted in late 2017 to underwrite a joint study by Covanta and Titan, said Department Director Michael J. Fernandez, “after which we expect to start processing the ash on site for use in portland cement.”

Miami-Dade County commissioners voted in late 2017 to underwrite a joint study by Covanta and Titan Redevelopment Energy, which operates the department’s state-of-the-art Resources Recovery Facility at 2525 NW 62nd St., and Titan America Pennasco, a cement manufacturer in Medley, to evaluate the use of the ash as a substitute for increasingly scarce coal ash in a one-day commercial-scale pilot test.

The results were subsequently tested at the University of Florida’s Hinkley Center for Solid and Hazardous Waste Research. The center, created by the Florida Legislature when the Florida Solid Waste Act of 1988 was adopted, is an extension service that conducts research on waste management issues.

Last year the Hinkley Center found that cement made with waste ash from the Miami-Dade’s recovery facility met state and national performance standards.

“Our research, which is in line with what we’ve seen taking place in Japan and Europe, shows that you can substitute the bottom ash from waste-energy plants for some of the cement we produce,” said John Schert, The Hinkley Center’s executive director.

With the approval of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Covanta last fall conducted tests to remove trace amounts of metal in order to make the product more attractive to cement producers.

PICTURE: Photo by Marlene Quaroni

Legend

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THE ACHIEVER

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New Miami-Dade commissioner heads League of Cities

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County to convert its ash to cash

Cost becoming asset

The county’s Department of Waste Management is poised to begin the conversion of waste ash, a toxic substance that has cost the county about $330,600 a year to dispose of safely, to a marketable asset.

“We are finalizing the details of a contract with Covanta and Titan,” said Department Director Michael J. Fernandez, “after which we expect to start processing the ash on site for use in portland cement.”

Miami-Dade County commissions

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Educators for hospitality industry see future jobs strength

By KELLY HESSLER

Although the hospitality industry has been hit hard by Covid, educators and professionals in the field see some positives for the future, when the return of travel might lead to a host of opportunities for their students.

The industry may in fact be short-staffed by 2024 as disenfranchised workers exit the field before travel fully returns, leading to a labor shortage in key job openings, said Peter Ricci, who directs Florida Atlantic University’s Hospitality, Tourism and Management department.

Florida Atlantic, he said, houses hotel rather than hospitality courses in its school and is providing students with the financial and analytical skills needed for the higher-paying roles in the industry.

The school’s programs include online or in-person bachelor and master degrees, scholarships, and certificates in degrees and tourism management and minor and certificate offerings at the graduate, undergraduate and occupational levels.

Chair of certificate program, Mr. Ricci, said, went viral this summer and gained over 80,000 enrollees from 165 countries.

The online free hospitality certificate, he said, consisted of a two-week, scaled-down version of the eight-week course offered to high schools focused on relevant training material for the industry. Many participants in the first and second cohorts were able to take the full program, he said, which was lower in price from $499 to $199 thanks in part to their donations.

The viral nature of the certificate course, he said, led to millions of comments and insights from students on the state of the industry.

Based on those comments, he said, roughly 25% of them were likely to exit the industry at least temporarily, while an equal number are optimum to return for recovery. However, he said, are cautiously optimistic and potentially underemployed.

In addition, he said, up this school year, Mr. Ricci, with masters program enrollment 15% higher than 2019, and 5% lower this spring than the same semester 2020.

Industryorrent strong times, he said, employment prospects for students are good. While tourism tends to have a lasting salary, according to Mr. Ricci, new hires at firms in Brickell headquarters.

At the high school level, Miami-Dade Career and Technical Education programs are focused on providing opportunities for both students and employers, according to Leup Ferriqz, executive director of the Department of Career and Technical Education information,

She said 8,000 to 10,000 students are involved in tourism or culinary-related programs at any given time between the Valley’s local career academies and other courses.

The increased use of technology in the industry, she said, has made courses more accessible than ever for students who may not live near the high school that offers their program of interest. Members of the industry, she said, can also utilize technology to conduct virtual visits with students.

She said, the school conducted food safety and customer service training for hotel workers.

Finally, she said, the school collaborated on programs with Camillus House, a local social service organization, and the local NAACP chapter to conduct, respectively, culinary training programs for residents and summer boot camps for students from inner-city areas.

The school launched two related programs, he said, Bacardi, and Mission New Normal: Bus Proj.

The former, available on FIU’s website, offers free courses on mixology and techniques with various spirits and liquors.

Mission New Normal, according to a press release, is a nine-week program and competition in which students will complete workshops taught by leaders in the hospitality, food and beverage industries before engaging in a final team competition to develop a modern business concept.

“The challenge,” he said, “will create a blueprint to redesign the hospitality experience to fit the current pandemic reality.” The program kicked off Oct. 3 and ends with selection of an Innovation Challenge Competition winner, who will have the chance to bring the idea to life at a pop-up activation at the South Beach Food & Wine Festival.