

## Kentucky Tourism offers prizes for COVID vaccinations

Kentucky is continuing its efforts to boost COVID-19 vaccinations by offering a new incentive, one that incorporates the state's tourism and outdoor hotspots.

Vax and Visit Kentucky has officially kicked off and aims to encourage people to get their shots -- and reward those who have already gotten theirs -- by selecting winners during Team Kentucky updates who will receive a variety of prizes through the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet.

The sweepstakes will offer travel incentives at state parks for Kentuckians who have received their first dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The incentives include golf rounds, overnight lodging at some resort parks and gift certificates for camping.

Eligible Kentuckians need to be 18 years or older and provide their birthdate, email, address, phone number, and name and location of the place that provided the individual with the vaccine.

Officials said the Kentucky Department of Public Health will verify vaccination information.

There will be three drawing dates – Sept. 8, Sept. 22 and Oct. 6 – and 10 winners will be selected during each drawing.

The names of winners will be posted on the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet's website and social media accounts.

– [www.wlky.com](http://www.wlky.com)



Photo: Gabrielle Canon/The Guardian

Traffic gridlocks as South Lake Tahoe residents flee the Caldor Fire.

## Residents, tourists flee S. Lake Tahoe

Thousands of residents have been forced to evacuate the tourist town of South Lake Tahoe as the raging Caldor fire draws closer, prompting chaotic scenes and clogged roads as residents rush to leave the area.

Monday's fresh evacuation orders, unheard of in the city, came a day after communities several miles south of the lake were abruptly ordered to evacuate as the wildfire raged nearby. By late Monday, the fire had been pushed by strong winds across highways 50 and 89, burning cabins as it swept into the Tahoe Basin.

"There is fire activity happening in

California that we have never seen before," said Chief Thom Porter, director of the California department of forestry and fire protection, known as Cal Fire.

Ash rained down on long lines of cars gridlocked on the roads exiting South Lake Tahoe, a popular vacation town home to more than 20,000. Cars inched along through the smoky haze, some piled high with belongings and others towing trailers with bikes and other recreation equipment. Occasionally, sirens rang out and red lights flashed into the distance.."

– [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com)

## Hawaii Tourism Agency funding restructured

The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), as a proxy for the Aloha State's tourism industry, reorganized under new leadership this summer, with a focus on balancing destination management with destination marketing.

But the biggest shake-up came from the state Legislature, which completely reshaped the agency's financing. The HTA will need legislative approval for its annual budget beginning next year.

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bostonusa.com

## Areas seek tourism improvement districts

**Tourism improvement districts are a means to collect funds to reinvest in product and are increasingly sought by marketers. Here are some examples.**

City Councilor Lydia Edward's push to create the first ever tourism marketing district for Boston and Cambridge passed the City Council unanimously last month.

The effort, co-sponsored by Councilor Frank Baker, will permit hotels in Boston and Cambridge to assess members of the district a fee that will be directly reinvested back into tourism, similar to a business improvement district.

The estimated \$10 million investment in the first year of the newly created district will promote tourism in Boston and Cambridge, help beautify and maintain green and open spaces in the two cities, increase supplier diversity, and create a reserve fund to help the tourism industry weather economic downturns.

The Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau partnered with Edwards to create the district and the plan sets forth the services, programs, budget, assessment structure, criteria for businesses,

management, and committee for the area.

– *charlestownbridge.com*

### Amarillo, Texas

Hoteliers are currently working on resubmitting a petition to the City of Amarillo to allow for a Tourism Public Improvement District (TPID).

The TPID was created by state legislature to allow for hoteliers to charge additional assessments to invest back into the hotel industry.

They are allowed to use those investments for tourism research, administration, sales & marketing.

– *newschannel10.com*

### Tulsa, Oklahoma

Tulsa city councilors have voted to reinstate the 3% assessment on room stays in hotels with 110 or more rooms.

The Tourism Improvement District assessment had been on hold since June 2019 after a court challenge.

In April, District Judge William Musseman found that the TID was created legally by the City Council and that it is constitutional and valid under state law.

– *tulsaworld.com*

## Hawaii Tourism Agency funding restructured

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Calls to address tourism's impacts on residents were already growing in 2019, a year when Hawaii welcomed a record 10.4 million visitors. Then COVID-19 struck, and for seven months tourism virtually ceased. Residents basked in traffic-free roads and unfettered access to beaches and hiking trails.

Then, driven almost entirely by mainland tourism, visitors rushed back to the Islands. By June, the monthly visitation was at 84% of 2019 levels. But pandemic protocols meant fewer businesses and attractions were open, and the ones that were had limited access, generating lines and frustration.

For years, the state Legislature had been discussing the idea of reining in the HTA, which was funded through a fixed disbursement from the Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT). Now, it had the momentum and votes to pass a new funding law and override a veto.

While the finances for the current fiscal year are largely unchanged, thanks to a combination of federal pandemic aid and the continuation of a portion of the TAT, the HTA will need legislative approval for its annual budget beginning next year.

The state Legislature also cut a portion of the TAT that went to individual counties. Now, each county has the authority to impose an additional 3% TAT. If that comes to pass, the combined TAT and general excise tax for Hawaii will surpass 18%, one of the highest rates in the country.

– *travelweekly.com*