

Inside look at Daytona Beach

Explorer Ponce de Leon, during his 1513 search for the Fountain of Youth, discovered the now-popular DeLeon Springs, located just west of Daytona Beach. Today, the Daytona Beach area entertains nearly 8 million visitors each year.

Perhaps best known for the Daytona International Speedway, the Daytona Beach area is located in Florida's Central East Coast region. It includes eight communities stretching 23 miles along the Atlantic Coast. The beach is 23 miles long and up to 500 feet wide at low tide. The gentle slope and tides have packed the hard, white sands nearest the ocean, enabling automobile access. Of the 23 miles of beach, 11 miles allow driving and parking during the day and when the tide permits. The sand becomes softer as one moves further inland from the waterline. Sand dunes in the area can reach as high as 25 feet.

Automobile racing became a regular pastime along the hard-packed beaches at the turn of the 20th Century. Ormond Beach became known as the "birthplace of speed" due to the various land speed records set there. In 1947, the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing was founded in Daytona Beach. Motorsports gained new ground in 1959 with the opening of the Daytona International Speedway, which continues to satisfy hundreds of thousands of speed-hungry fans each year. Visitors come from around the world to relax and recreate on one of the most beautiful, family-friendly beaches in Florida.

The average annual temperature is a warm 70 degrees. The average water temperature is also 70 degrees Fahrenheit. A typical January might range between the mid 60s and low 70s during the day and the 50s at night. Occasionally, there are cooler days but the temperature along the beach will usually be several degrees warmer than it is 15 miles inland. This moderating effect occurs because of ocean breezes, which also keep the climate mild in the winter.

The Daytona Beach area is excellent for deep-sea fishing. Record size marlin and other fish are abundant in the Atlantic Ocean. Fresh water fishing is also popular. Other outdoor activities include canoeing, camping, golfing, sailing, water skiing, jet skiing, surfing, paddle boarding, scuba diving, racquet sports, horseback riding, and of course, relaxing on the beach.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Daytona International Speedway. The 2.5-mile "super speedway" lives up to its billing as the "World Center of Racing" as it is involved in some type of high-speed activity every day for more than 4 months of the year. Daytona is a versatile 480-acre motorsports facility that is home to the biggest, richest and most prestigious stock car race in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series—the DAYTONA 500. In addition to a jammed-packed racing calendar, Daytona International Speedway offers three separate

tours that take race fans inside the hallowed grounds of NASCAR's marquee race track. The newly expanded 60-minute All Access tour allows fans to view never-before-seen areas including the Daytona 500 Club, the Sprint Tower, the driver's meeting room and the NASCAR Sprint Cup garages, in addition to Gatorade Victory Lane and the Sprint FAN-ZONE, which are included in the 30-minute Speedway Tour. A special VIP 3-hour tour is available by advanced reservation on select days throughout the year. Open 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. daily, (386) 947-6800.

Daytona Lagoon. Located in the heart of Daytona Beach's tourist district, waterpark visitors can enjoy flume rides, a giant wave pool and tubing river, and several fast-paced waterslides. Dry activities include Grand Prix go-kart racing, miniature golf, laser tag, a high-speed thrill ride, an arcade and more!

Florida Tennis Center. All ages and ability levels are welcome at the United States Tennis Association's state-of-the-art facility in Daytona Beach. Tennis enthusiasts can enjoy 24 hydro-clay courts, which are cool, fast drying, and easy on the body. There are also 20 lighted courts available for evening play. Racquet rentals and demonstrations are available, or guests can purchase their own equipment at the Full Service Pro Shop.

Marine Science Center. The Marine Science Center provides an innovative learning experience where visitors can discover, enjoy and appreciate the many wonders of marine science. The center houses a wet/dry classroom and lab, gift shop, a sea turtle exhibit, sea turtle rehabilitation facilities, a seabird sanctuary, a 5,000 gallon artificial reef aquarium, as well as static and interactive educational displays.

Richard Petty Driving Experience. Experience the 31 degree banking of Daytona International Speedway's 2.5 mile track at speeds of more than 150 mph! Feel the power of a 600-horsepower NASCAR style stock car. Select from 8 to 24 lap adrenaline pumping driving experiences. No reservations required for the "Ride Along" program. Please call ahead for available dates and rates. 1801 W. International Speedway Blvd., Daytona Beach, (800) BE-PETTY.

Deep-sea fishing excursions. Whether you cast your line from a pier, join a deep-sea fishing excursion or prefer flats fishing you can do it here. From the Ponce Inlet marinas, a fleet of offshore deep-sea fishing crafts depart daily. For flats fishing, head for the estuaries of the Tomoka Basin and the Indian River Lagoon. Also, The DeLand/River of Lakes Corridor area offers some of the best bass fishing in Florida. For rules and regulations regarding salt water and fresh water and fishing, license information and requirements call (888) 347-4356. ■

What to Do Next?

Now that you've seen what there is to do and realize you have got to be at this must-attend educational event, you need to do several things.

First, go to www.STMA.org. There you will be able to:

- ➔ Register for the conference
- ➔ Download the digital brochure
- ➔ Download the Conference Registration form
- ➔ Also, make sure to fill in the form completely, including checkboxes for Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet attendance.
- ➔ Make sure and check out the Schedule Builder and Trip Report. Both of these items can help you justify the investment to attend conference to your employer!

Other things you can do to prepare for the STMA Conference and Exhibition:

- ➔ Book your airfare. Rates will get higher as the holiday season nears and the STMA Conference and Exhibition approach, so book early to get the best rates.
- ➔ Book your hotel room at the Hilton Daytona Beach (at Ocean Walk Village), the official hotel of the STMA Conference and Exhibition, at the exclusive rate offered to attendees. These rates are good through Dec. 22, 2012, so book early because they could, and likely will, sell out. Go to www.STMA.org to make your reservation today!
- ➔ Check www.STMA.org and keep an eye on your inbox to keep up with the latest information about the conference.