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Nationwide Search Lands Daruma Tech Deal With Marion County, Florida, to Create Trip-Planning App

Daruma Tech's exceptional track record as a developer of high-impact, highly customized mobile loyalty apps stood out to Marion County decisionmakers.

BOCA RATON, FL, USA, June 13, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Software developer Daruma Tech, creator of award-winning mobile loyalty apps for the hospitality and tourism industries, is creating its most ambitious app yet, a mobile trip planning app for Marion County, Florida. The app features

Marion County Travel Guide App

advanced trip-planning functionality that allows users to plan and map every step of their visits, from hotels to restaurants to attractions and shopping destinations. "Users can assemble a list of places to eat and places to stay, save it, and when they get here, they can use the list to navigate their trip," explained Susan Erickson of Daruma Tech. In addition, the app will include news articles about area attractions along with deals from local businesses.

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> *Susan Erickson, Co-Founder of Daruma Tech*

Long known to industry insiders as a global mecca for thoroughbred horse breeding and training, Marion County is now striving to boost its profile as a destination for tourism and recreation. The idea of commissioning a branded tourism app for the county was inspired by a trip to Lexington, Kentucky, by a delegation from Marion County. Lexington is also a major destination for equestrian activities, and the Marion delegation sought to use it as a model for building its own countywide

destination brand. "They also had a very progressive app and were able to really dive in deep, especially with the equestrian world," said Loretta Shaffer, director of tourism development for Marion County.

Shaffer added that Marion County has the extra advantage of offering a rich range of attractions beyond its famous horses. "We are known for our outdoor playgrounds, we are a mecca of iconic attractions like the Cross-Border Greenway and the Canyons Zip Line, the only zip lines in the canyons in the state of Florida," she said. Shaffer added that visitors can also enjoy over 600 rivers, lakes, and springs, along with the Ocala National Forest. In addition, the region is known for its world-class sporting facilities, such as the Florida Aquatics Swimming Training (FAST) center, the largest swimming center in the southeast United States, along with a lively downtown restaurant and shopping scene in Ocala, the county seat.

While the app will feature a dedicated section highlighting Marion County's equestrian attractions, the county sees one of its major goals as helping visitors who travel to the county for horse-related work or recreation to discover the many other attractions the region has to offer. "Maybe they're at their farm or they're at the World Equestrian Center, and they're not going and exploring the rest of the area," explained Jessica Heller, Marion County's marketing and communications manager. "So the app will make it easier to explore and see what's new around them."

A nationwide search for the "best in breed" developer for their envisioned app led Marion County to choose Daruma Tech, Shaffer said. "The executive committee that awarded that bid was very enamored with their work and with their opportunity to be able to really customize and create something again that was one of a kind and very genuine and authentic to our county," Shaffer said. "The process so far has been going great."

The app was released in early June, coinciding with National Travel and Tourism Week and is a natural fit for any State, County, Chamber of Commerce or organization looking to grow economic development locally, in a fun, engaging and interactive manner.

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