Welcome to the Southbank Hotel by Marriott

Site of the 2022 National Federation of the Blind of Florida

State Convention

The Greater Jacksonville and Greater Daytona Chapters of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida are ready to welcome you to our 2022 State convention at the Southbank Hotel.

Built in 1981, the Southbank Hotel is nestled on the south bank of the St Johns River and boasts convenience to both the San Marco and Riverside neighborhoods. The hotel has many amenities including an outdoor pool, fitness center and on-site bar and restaurant. The hotel has been recently renovated and draws inspiration from the many ports and bridges around Jacksonville.

As we enter the hotel’s entrance, we find ourselves in a spacious lobby. The lobby area is shaped like a rectangle, with the entrance and elevators on the short sides of the rectangle, and the check-in area and bar along the long sides. If we were to walk straight upon entering the lobby we would come to a seating area with several couches and tables. This area can be best identified by the carpeting on the floor. The carpet is a great landmark to help us find the check-in desk, so after entering the main entrance, we will walk straight until we encounter the carpet, then make a right. Follow the carpet until it ends, then continue walking straight, and the check-in counter will be right in front of us. Immediately to the right of the counter is an ATM machine.

If we place the counter on our right and continue walking straight, the next area we come to will be a vending area. Here, items such as snacks, Starbucks coffee, sodas and other sundries can be purchased. Note, the machine used to purchase the items is currently not accessible, so a member of the hotel staff, friend or volunteer will be happy to assist.

Making a right immediately after the check-in counter ends will lead down a long hallway which has the fitness center on the left, and a vending machine containing medical supplies such as pain relievers and masks.

Continuing past the vending area will bring us to a water station on the right. The water station is a table with a water cooler and cups sitting on it. There is also a trash can directly to the left of the water station so that any used cups can be discarded.

Once we come to the end of the water station, there will be a column on the left. This column is a good indicator that the hallway that leads to the elevators is coming up soon. Turning right at the next hall, will lead into the hallway that holds both the elevators, and Convention center. The elevators are to the left, and convention center to the right.

For now, lets return to the main entrance, and explore the other side of the lobby. This time, from the entrance, we will again go straight until we get to the carpet, but instead of a right, we will turn left. Walk until the carpet ends on the right and turn right again. Johnny’s bar will be immediately on the left.

If we continue past Johnny’s and walk until the wall on our left side ends, the hotel restaurant will be straight ahead. The restaurant currently is open for breakfast only.

If we pass Johnny’s and make a left when the wall ends, we will enter an area that has a pool table and a foosball table. Going straight will take us to an exit door. This door can be used to get to one of the dog relief areas.

For this exit door, a room key is not needed. Once we have exited the hotel, we will continue to walk straight until we reach a sidewalk. Make a right on the sidewalk and keep walking straight. One great landmark is the sound of the air conditioning units. Once we hear the AC units we know the dog relief area is on the right. A trash can with baggies is also being provided. To find this continue down the sidewalk until it veers to the left. Once the sidewalk turns, start checking on the right for the trash can and bag stand.

Now that we are back in the hotel, lets check out the convention center area. Remember that if we enter the hallway just after the water station, the elevators will be on the left, and the convention center on the right. The convention center is shaped like a crescent, with 3 entrances. When we first enter the convention center, we will find ourselves in the prefunction registration area. This is where we will hold convention registration. Making a right here will take us down a long hall with meeting rooms on the right, and seating on the left. The first meeting room we come to is Anchor, followed by Rope. After Rope is an open area with hallways that lead to the hospitality suite, the pool, and the second dog relief area. If we turn right here, we will come to some restrooms, and an exit that leads out to the pool. If we make a left instead of a right, we will come to a hall with some suites, including our hospitality suite and an exit. Using this exit to get to the second dog relief area will require a room key.

However, if we continue going straight through the open area and down the hallway, we will come to a dead end. If we make a left here, there will be windows on the right, and Port Ballroom on the left. Port is where our General Session will be held. The next room is Winward which is where the auction will be held. Starboard is next which is where our exhibit hall will be.

Remember that when we were in the pre-function area, we made a right to get to the meeting rooms. Now let’s go back to the pre-function area and make a left. Doing this will bring us to a hallway with meeting rooms on either side. The first room on the right is Tug, on the left are Rigging and Sail. There are two final rooms that should be mentioned. They are just outside of the pre-function area. If we are coming from the elevators and walking straight, they will be on the right. Those rooms are called Commerce and Dockside.

Now that we have finished our tour of this great hotel, it is time to get ready for an awesome state convention. Remember that if you get a little lost listen for the talking signs. We will have talking signs and ambassadors throughout the hotel to assist whenever needed.

Also, don’t hesitate to reach out to either of the host chapters or the state board with any questions or concerns.