

SDTA Celebrates TED Conference Move to San Diego with ‘Flipfloptimism’: An Exclusive Launch of Biodegradable Flip- Flops

- *San Diego Tourism Authority welcomes the TED community with a local partnership that reflects shared values of sustainability, optimism and innovation.*
- *SDTA debuted “**Flipfloptimism**”: a limited-edition collection of biodegradable flip-flops derived from plant-based polymers in partnership with locally based Algenesis Labs*
- *Distributed to attendees at TED2026 in Vancouver this week, the flip-flops leave messages of "Good Vibes" in the sand, turning San Diego’s signature optimism into an eco-friendly fashion statement.*

SAN DIEGO: The [San Diego Tourism Authority](#) (SDTA) is celebrating TED’s decision to make San Diego its new home in March 2027 for the annual flagship conference with the launch of “Flipfloptimism” – an exclusive edition of fully biodegradable flip flops derived from plant-based polymers in partnership with locally based [Algenesis Labs](#).

In December 2025, [TED](#) announced it will relocate its globally recognized flagship conference to San Diego, returning the organization to its California roots. Anchored at the San Diego Convention Center from March 1-4, 2027, the conference will bring an international audience of thinkers, innovators, and leaders to the region.

To commemorate this milestone, SDTA debuted “**Flipfloptimism**”: a limited-edition collection of biodegradable flip-flops available for guests attending TED2026 in Vancouver this week, created in partnership with [The Shipyard](#), SDTA’s brand agency of record, and Algenesis Labs, a San Diego-born-and-based leader in sustainable technology. Algenesis was spun out of UC San Diego and is at the forefront of developing high-performance footwear that is 100% biodegradable

and free of harmful microplastics.

The flip-flops are crafted using Soleic® foam, the company's proprietary plant-based polyurethane found in its groundbreaking [BLUEVIEW® Shoes](#) line. Unlike traditional petroleum-based plastics, Soleic® materials are fully biodegradable and do not shed microplastics into the environment with every step. This offers a clean alternative to the materials found in most footwear.

“As a lifelong surfer, the ocean has always been my backyard. But seeing the mounting crisis of plastics pollution on our beaches changed how I saw my work in the lab,” said Dr. Stephen Mayfield, CEO and Founder of Algenesis Labs. “At Algenesis, we set out to prove that a company born in San Diego could do more than build a better shoe, we could help build a better future for our coastline. ‘Flipfloptimism’ is about more than style; it’s about leaving only our footprints at the beach.”

The limited-edition flip-flops are stamped with positive affirmations on the soles: “Good Vibes” and “Shine Bright.” They let you spread optimism wherever you go, and support a circular materials economy while supporting your feet. The design turns San Diego’s philosophy of eternal optimism into a tangible fashion statement — and a reminder to keep moving forward with a little sunshine in every stride.

“TED’s decision to bring its flagship conference to San Diego reflects what makes our region distinct” said Daniel Kuperschmid, president and CEO at SDTA. “San Diego is where research, creativity, and purpose intersect. Partnering with a forward-thinking company like Algenesis allows us to tell a broader story about San Diego’s leadership in innovation while welcoming TED and its global community to the Bright Side.”

This TED2026 activation represents the second time SDTA and Algenesis have collaborated to demonstrate San Diego's leadership in innovation. In 2015, SDTA and researchers from UC San Diego (the team that would go on to found

Algenisis) unveiled a sustainable surfboard made from algae to celebrate San Diego being featured in the National Geographic documentary “World’s Smart Cities.”

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For more information on Algenisis Lab visit <https://www.algenisislabs.com/>

For more information on TED, visit <https://www.ted.com/>

For downloadable image, [click here](#).

ABOUT SAN DIEGO TOURISM AUTHORITY

(SDTA) is a private, non-profit, mutual benefit corporation composed of more than 1,000 member organizations, businesses, local governments, and individuals seeking a better community through the visitor industry. SDTA members include tourism-related entities in such categories as lodging, dining, arts, attractions, shopping, and transportation, among others, as well as other companies indirectly involved in tourism. Visit sandiego.org to learn more.

The majority of funding received by the San Diego Tourism Authority is derived from [San Diego Tourism Marketing District](#) Assessment Funds. Lodging business in the District raise these funds through self-assessments for the purpose of promoting tourism in the San Diego region.