



NEWS RELEASE: For Immediate Release

Contact:

Kit Cramer, President & CEO
828-258-6123
kcramer@ashevillechamber.org

**Asheville Chamber selects new Senior Vice President and Executive Director
of the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau**

Asheville, NC (March 23, 2012) – The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the selection of Stephanie Pace Brown as Senior Vice President and Executive Director of the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (Asheville CVB).

As Senior Vice President & Executive Director, Brown will direct all aspects of the Asheville CVB and will produce and administer the program of work for the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA).

“We had a very talented slate of candidates. We are excited about the leadership and expertise that Stephanie will bring to this position. Her track record of accomplishments during 20 years in the tourism industry, combined with her research and management experience greatly impressed us and contributed to the decision to hire her,” said Ron Morin, vice president and managing director at The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa and chair of BCTDA.

Brown currently serves as President and CEO of the Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association in Alexandria, Virginia where she has led a team of 22 with a budget of \$3 million since 2007. During her tenure, membership has increased 40 percent, and visitor spending in the city has doubled the growth rate of the surrounding area.

Prior to leading the Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association, Brown directed marketing and public affairs efforts for Mount Vernon, including advertising, media relations, special events and group sales. In addition, she has extensive background in tourism-related marketing and economic research having worked as research manager for the Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism and as Director of Customer Research for The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Brown has also served on the US Travel Association Board of Directors, Research Advisory Committee and Marketing Outlook Forum Committee as well as on the Travel Industry Association of America’s National Council of Attractions and Speakers Bureau.

“With her Colonial Williamsburg, Mount Vernon and Alexandria experience, Stephanie has a great background for this position,” said Kit Cramer, president and CEO of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce. “She has exceptional marketing skills, is highly regarded in the industry and has very good instincts. Those skills will serve her well in this position.”

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“I am thrilled to join the Asheville CVB to promote this thriving mountain city,” said Brown. “Asheville’s tourism marketing program is nationally respected, and I’m excited to join this successful team.”

Brown will begin working June 15th and replaces Kelly Miller, who led the Asheville CVB from 1999 to 2011.

A seven-member team comprised of tourism community leaders served as the search committee. Mike Gamble of SearchWide, a firm that specializes in the hospitality industry, was the recruiter for the process.

The Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau is a department of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce and is the contract agent for the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority. BCTDA is a quasi-governmental entity which oversees tourism marketing, sales and product development efforts utilizing the county’s 4 percent occupancy tax revenues. The Asheville CVB promotes the Asheville destination through out-of-market advertising, public relations and other marketing and sales initiatives resulting in approximately 3.66 million overnight visitors each year with an economic impact of about \$2.1 billion each year.

The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce is a member organization with over 1,800 member businesses and organizations. Chamber members collaborate with community organizations and coalitions to support the community and each other with the mission of building community through business. The Chamber is home to a 4,000 square foot Visitor Center which welcomes over 195,000 visitors per year.

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