



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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International Tourism Leader to Become NH State Tourism Director

New England tourism industry leader will officially begin January 31

Concord, N.H. - (January 9, 2020) – Tourism industry leader Lori Harnois was confirmed as the first state tourism director appointed by the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA). The Executive Council unanimously confirmed Governor Sununu’s appointment of Harnois on Wednesday, January 8. For the past five years, Harnois has served as executive director of Discover New England (DNE), a six-state collaborative international travel and tourism marketing organization based in Portsmouth, NH. She has deep knowledge of the NH tourism industry having previously served at the former Department of Resource and Economic Development. Harnois will officially begin as director of BEA’s division of Travel & Tourism Development on January 31.

Under the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA), the tourism director role includes the execution of the state’s “Tourist to Talent” talent attraction strategy and plan. Under this strategy, Harnois will develop associated strategies to support business and workforce recruitment, using marketing and branding created for tourism to drive workforce development and strengthen New Hampshire’s growing economy.

“We are pleased to have Lori in this role as she brings tremendous knowledge, experience, and a forward-thinking approach,” said Governor Chris Sununu. “Tourism is critically important in New Hampshire as our second-largest revenue generator and Lori’s skillset, strategic vision, and expertise make her an easy choice for this critical state position.”

During her tenure at Discover New England, Harnois developed and executed a strategic direction for the promotion and marketing of New England that resulted in a 22 percent increase in international visitation and a 41 percent increase in international visitor spending. Harnois also oversaw a full rebranding of Discover New England, while presiding over the region’s largest travel trade conference.

“Lori has more than 20 years of leadership promoting New Hampshire and New England as domestic and international tourism destinations, making her uniquely qualified to assume the role of state tourism director,” said Taylor Caswell, commissioner, New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs. “With keen marketing insights from the entire region, Lori will allow New Hampshire to refine its marketing, stand apart in the region and draw more visitors as we continue to reinforce that the Granite State is the premier destination in the northeast for living, working and playing.”

“New Hampshire is a unique and special place, I’m excited to have the opportunity to work for the division again,” Harnois said. “I look forward to sharing my passion for New Hampshire and applying my two decades of experience to attract people to the Granite State both from a tourism and an economic development perspective.”

State tourism Deputy Director Amy Bassett has served as acting director since April 2019.

Stay connected with New Hampshire tourism on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [YouTube](#), and be sure to follow the #LiveFreeNH tag to see what other people are saying about winter in New Hampshire.

ABOUT THE DIVISION OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The Division of Travel and Tourism Development, as part of the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs, works with the state’s seven travel regions to increase visitation, travel and visitor expenditures in order to expand business activity and employment throughout the state. The division is responsible for domestic and international advertising and public relations, literature publication and distribution, www.visitnh.gov administration, grant administration and research to monitor and measure the impact of travel and tourism to the state. For more information about New Hampshire tourism, call 603-271-2665 or visit www.visitnh.gov.