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### **DISCOVER ALBANY STARTS OFF YEAR BY ANNOUNCING ONE PROMOTION & THREE NEW HIRES**

ALBANY, N.Y. – Discover Albany is pleased to kick off the New Year with the announcement three new hires to the Sales and Marketing Departments, including Jay Cloutier, who will serve as Director of Sales, and Michelle Santos, who will serve as the new Marketing Coordinator and Social Media Strategist.

Jay Cloutier joined the department as the new Director of Sales in September.

Jay Cloutier grew up in Burlington, VT and earned a degree in in Early American History from the University of Vermont. Cloutier's wealth of experience in the hospitality industry began at an Econo Lodge in Vermont as a Restaurant Manager. He moved to the Albany area in 1999 to work at the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau for six years. Most recently, Cloutier worked as a Group Sales Manager for three conference hotels in Albany, providing him with extensive experience in positioning Albany's assets.

Jay was excited to return to the bureau in September after 12 years in the field. "I am most excited at the new opportunities that the Capital Complex has presented to the destination," says Cloutier. "I just built a proposal for a 10,000-person, weeklong conference that once was considered a dream, not workable. Now with the convention center pieces in place, and working out of the same playbook, this client's event has a chance to become a reality."

The Discover Albany Marketing Department is also pleased to welcome Michelle Santos to the team as the new Marketing Coordinator and Social Media Strategist. Michelle Santos grew up in Boise, Idaho and moved to the East Coast to attend Marist College, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Communications with a concentration in Public Relations and minors in Business and Fashion Merchandising. She previously worked at a boutique public relations firm in New York City and as a Project Manager at Behan Communications. After moving to the Capital Region, Santos created the Instagram account [@Upstate\\_And\\_Away](#) to showcase the area's events and attractions.

"I am very excited to continue to promote Albany as a convention and visitor destination in my new position," she says. "I love attending the many vibrant events in the area and am excited to become more involved in the local tourism industry."

To better serve partners' needs, Discover Albany also created a new position, Partnership & Community Relations Manager. The organization promoted Danielle Walsh serve in this role. Walsh, who was formerly Sales Coordinator, is excited to be in the new role, working more directly with partners and strengthening the bureau's ties to the community. Walsh is a Capital Region native, who graduated from SUNY New Paltz with a degree in English, and worked in hospitality upon graduation. The position will be part of the Marketing team.

Sara Reed also joined Discover Albany, serving as the new Sales/Services Administrator. Sara graduated from SUNY Oswego with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and minor in Spanish. Before joining Discover Albany, Reed was a Financial Service Representative for Nationwide Financial.

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"We are excited to kick off 2018 by announcing our new Partnership & Community Relations Manager position and welcoming these new employees and board members to our growing team," says Michele Vennard, President/CEO of the ACCVB. "These individuals all bring a wide range of valuable skills to our organization and we are looking forward to their contributions to Discover Albany."

**ABOUT Discover Albany**

*The Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. was established in 1976 to promote the civic and commercial progress of the community through increased development of conventions and tourism. Today, the organization is known as Discover Albany. Discover Albany currently represents more than 300 member-businesses, and assists each year in hundreds of regional meetings. Discover Albany also operates the Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center, Henry Hudson Planetarium, and the Albany International Airport Information Center. The Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau Foundation was established in 1993 to provide educational opportunities and work with other organizations to secure grants and funding to advance regional travel and tourism projects. For more information, call 518-434-1217 or 800-258-3582 or visit [www.albany.org](http://www.albany.org).*

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