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## Visit Oakland Appoints Dhruv Patel Chairman of the Board of Directors

Oakland, CA – Visit Oakland, the city's official Destination Management Organization (DMO), is pleased to announce the appointment of Dhruv Patel as Chairman of their Board of Directors. As President and COO of Oakland based Ridgemont Hospitality, Patel's experience spans 13 years in the hotel industry where he has been actively engaged with tourism and the community. He is proud to be the youngest person to be appointed as Chairman for the DMO and eager to work with the team as they usher in a new era for Visit Oakland.

*"I look forward to being a support to the new leadership and team at Visit Oakland, my fellow board members, and our community" said Patel. Being an "Oaklander" through and through and a leader in hospitality - will be valuable as we rebuild Visit Oakland. During this time of recovery, the industry and community need the support and drive of Visit Oakland now more than ever. I am honored to work alongside President and CEO Peter Gamez to help our businesses and destination thrive."*

*"I am thrilled that Dhruv Patel is Chairman of the Board for Visit Oakland" commented Peter Gamez, President and CEO, Visit Oakland. "We share the same vision for making Visit Oakland the best DMO to work with, and a joint commitment to innovative marketing and cutting-edge technology. Dhruv's passion for Oakland is contagious and will position the organization to achieve greatness."*

Born, raised and currently living in Oakland, Patel has a life-long connection to the city. 40 years ago his father emigrated from Africa and his mother from India. His parents began their careers in the family hotel business, helping to run and manage a small lodging establishment in Oakland. Patel joined the family business in 2008. Over the years, Ridgemont Hospitality has expanded their portfolio to include six properties – two of which are located in their home town of Oakland; *Hampton Inn Oakland Downtown-City Center*, *Holiday Inn Express & Suites Oakland Airport*. The Patel family story captures the inspiring essence of Oakland and celebrates the City's true entrepreneurial spirit.

Throughout his career, Patel has been a strong leader and is highly regarded for his success. In his previous role as General Manager of the Hampton Inn & Suites Oakland Airport, he led the hotel to earn the prestigious “Circle of Excellence Award” – an honor reserved for the top 10% of all Hilton properties worldwide. Most recently, under his leadership, Ridgemont Hospitality developed the Hampton Inn – the first new hotel in Downtown Oakland in 19 years. This began a new chapter for the City and spearheaded the hotel boom that carries on today.

Oakland continues to experience growth and development, producing sought after commercial and residential space. Through it all, the city has managed to maintain the authenticity of each of its eighteen districts. *“As Oakland evolves the distinct neighborhoods remain unique in their own space and continue to celebrate diversity and individuality”* Patel said. *“These are wonderful gifts to share with our visitors. I am so proud of all that Oakland has to offer. We have beautiful parks and recreation, outstanding restaurants, unique venues, a vibrant art and entertainment scene and so much more. As Chairman for Visit Oakland I will work with my colleagues to put Oakland at the forefront – making it a leading destination of choice for business and leisure travelers.”*

Patel is a graduate of the University of San Francisco, where he double majored in Finance and Entrepreneurship. He serves on the board for the California Hotels & Lodging Association (CH&LA) and the Alameda Chamber of Commerce. He is a member of Oakland Rotary #3 and served on the City Of Alameda Economic Development Task Force.

Patel lives in Oakland with his wife Bhumika. Together they travel the world, eating their way through cities and immersing themselves in local culture. A lover of golf, Patel enjoys spending time outdoors and visiting national parks with Bhumika.

*Visit Oakland is a private, not-for-profit, 501(c) (6) organization, funded by hotel occupancy tax and the Oakland Tourism Business Improvement District.*

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