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Discover Newport Announces Leadership Transition Plan

Board of Directors announce strategic plan for succession

Newport, RI (October 11, 2024), Discover Newport President & CEO Evan Smith has informed the Board of Directors of his plans to retire during the first quarter of 2025. As part of a succession strategy, an appointed search committee interviewed several firms, and upon their recommendation the Board of Directors unanimously voted to select the experienced national search firm Winner Partners. The firm will assist with appointing a future leader for the destination marketing organization that promotes the nine towns in Newport & Bristol counties. Smith will continue to serve as President & CEO in the coming months until a successor has been named, helping to ensure a smooth leadership transition.

“Evan and the professional staff at Discover Newport have played an instrumental role in significantly evaluating the visibility of the greater Newport area as a globally renowned destination for leisure travel and a top choice to host conferences. On behalf of our 18-member Board of Directors, we would like to express our gratitude for the tremendous impact Evan has had on the entire hospitality and tourism community of this region. While Evan will be a tough act to follow, our board is committed to working with our search firm to find a new dynamic leader, capable of supporting the organization's mission statement and vision moving forward,” said T.R. McGrath, Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Smith has served as the President & CEO for the last 19 years and has dedicated in total nearly 35 years to Discover Newport. “I am grateful beyond words to have had the opportunity to serve in what I think may be the best job in America. To coach an amazing staff which I believe are some of the most talented travel professionals in the nation today. Working in unity with all our industry partners, I am so proud of all that we accomplished during the last three decades,” Smith said. “I believe this is a very appropriate time to look back at Newport history and reflect on the evolution of the greater Newport area as a destination resort. To recognize and pay tribute to the countless number of community leaders and organizations who have contributed so much to the framework of our communities over the last 100 years. To acknowledge and applaud all their contributions and accomplishments. Looking forward, this is an exciting time for our organization and for our nine communities to secure a new leader, with new energy and vision, and to chart a new course for the tourism narrative for the decades to come.”

Winner Partners, an innovative, certified woman-owned recruiting firm was selected to lead the high-profile President & CEO search for Discover Newport, the destination marketing organization that promotes this exquisite community to a global audience of travelers.

“We are humbled and very excited to bring to the table a diverse and inclusive spectrum of the very best candidates who have a variety of experiences and backgrounds for the benefit of Discover Newport,” said Tina Winner, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of the firm. “The team will work tirelessly to advance the selection of this coveted, critical leadership role with thorough evaluations of candidates supported by our proprietary process.”

An announcement will be made in the near future on the application process for this position.

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About Discover Newport

Discover Newport is the official destination management organization (DMO) dedicated to promoting the City of Newport and the eight surrounding coastal townships in Newport and Bristol counties, Rhode Island. These include Barrington, Bristol, Jamestown, Little Compton, Middletown, Newport, Portsmouth, Tiverton and Warren. As a non-profit organization, Discover Newport partners with stakeholders throughout our tourism and hospitality industry to market the region as a premier destination for business and leisure travel. Learn more at DiscoverNewport.org.

About Winner Partners

Winner Partners is a privately held, executive search and recruitment firm headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida with offices around the country. Our firm was intentionally designed as a collaborative platform of the most talented search consultants in the market matched with proven, successful leaders who are subject-matter experts in their respective industries. A certified, woman-owned business, the firm has deep experience in community and economic impact-focused nonprofits, as well as the for-profit industries. Winner Partners specializes in search strategy with an eye on diversity while building partnerships. WinnerPartners.net