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VISIT HUNTINGTON BEACH ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC REORGANIZATION

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif., August 25, 2015 – Visit Huntington Beach, the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for the City of Huntington Beach, announced today a strategic realignment of its internal organizational structure and several staff changes.

“This move is an important step to ensure that the city’s DMO meets the changing needs of today’s savvy, socially wired travel consumer, as well as strengthen the position of the Surf City USA brand in key national and international markets as the destination’s products and services continue to evolve and diversify,” said Visit Huntington Beach President & CEO Kelly Miller, CDME.

Destination Marketing and Communications was placed under the helm of Visit Huntington Beach Chief Marketing Officer Susan Thomas this spring. Rich Alot will join VHB as Director of Digital Marketing on Sept. 8 in order to deepen and expand the digital marketing capacity of the VHB team.

“Rich comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience in both destination marketing and corporate tourism through his tenure with Visit Tampa Bay as the lead on their digital marketing strategy, as well as prior work with Visit Orlando, Disney Parks and Vacation Club, Marriott and Ritz-Carlton,” according to Thomas. “Our ability to connect the brand with consumers in the ever-burgeoning digital space will expand under Rich’s guidance in new and exciting ways that resonate across the spectrum of today’s multi-generational travel marketplace. His demonstrated leadership in cross-functional teams to achieve the highest possible ROI results in the DMO and travel industry is formidable.”

Rich Alot earned his B.A. as a dual major in Journalism and Political Science from the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Conn. and his M.B.A. from Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla. He achieved an Adrian Award from the Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International (HSAMI) for Digital Marketing in 2014 and Web Development Award from the Web Marketing Association in 2009.

Jennifer Tong, 2015 graduate of Chapman University with a B.A. in Public Relations and Advertising, has also joined the Visit Huntington Beach team as Communications Coordinator after a successful internship with the DMO this spring and summer. “Jennifer is a quick study, with great people and technology skills, local knowledge, inquisitiveness and a passion for telling the HB story to visitors,” states Thomas.

Part of the realignment at Visit Huntington Beach involves changes in job responsibilities and focus for several current team members. Rachel Volbert has been promoted to Content and Creative Services Manager, where she manages the development and delivery of integrated and cost-effective cross-channel marketing content and campaigns in target domestic and international travel markets to both leisure and group travel influencers and decision makers. Briton Saxton continues as Film Commissioner while expanding her role in video and film production management for VHB, and serves as Travel Trade Manager for “Tier One” international markets of Canada, UK, Ireland, China and Australia. Sophia Valdivia moves into a new Sports, Travel Trade and Media Coordinator position. She will target sports event planners, as well as “Tier Two” international markets in Brazil, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Japan, the Middle East and Mexico. In addition, she will function as VHB’s in-house media buyer.

Additional changes in the visitor and sales support team will be announced in the fall.

Visit Huntington Beach's Board Chairman and Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel, General Manager Paulette Fischer added that "effective destination marketing has the proven long term yield of spurring valuable infrastructure development, transportation networks, attracting investors and innovation to the city, and sustaining and improving the local quality of life for all. I'm proud of Visit Huntington Beach and its evolution through this dynamic reorganization; it's a win-win-win for the businesses, the city and the local community."

About Visit Huntington Beach

Visit Huntington Beach is the official destination marketing organization of Huntington Beach, Surf City USA®. One of Southern California's premier coastal destinations, and recently named the "Best Beach in the US" by Time, Inc., Huntington Beach is the ideal location for a California family vacation, active outdoor adventure trip or relaxing weekend getaway.

With 10 miles of wide-open white sand California beaches, Huntington Beach is a destination of choice for vacationers and business travelers alike. To plan your Surf City USA® vacation, or to learn more about Huntington Beach, see the Visit Huntington Beach website at www.surfcityusa.com or call 1-800-729-6232 for a free Visitors Guide.

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