



STATE OF WASHINGTON

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY, TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
TOURISM OFFICE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washington State Tourism Commission Selects New Co-Chair

Commission begins second year; meeting schedule available on Washington State Tourism's industry Web site

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Tourism Commission has elected Kimberly Bennett, CEO of the Southwest Washington Convention and Visitors Bureau, to serve as co-chair of the commission. She takes over the role from Kris Watkins of the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau. Washington State Tourism Commission co-chairs are elected to serve for one-year.

Following a productive and successful first year, the commission began their second year with a meeting in September at which the commissioners elected Bennett as co-chair and received program updates from Washington State Tourism staff.

“I am thrilled with the work the tourism commission has already achieved in its first year,” said Bennett. “Our task going forward is to strategically leverage the state’s current \$7.8 million budget and develop additional public-private partnerships that will continue to grow tourism in Washington.”

“Kim has deftly led the competitive grant subcommittee as they’ve launched the state’s tourism grant program. I look forward to continuing to work with her as she takes on the role of co-chair,” said Marsha Massey, executive director of the Washington State Tourism Commission.

The commission was formed in 2007 by Gov. Gregoire’s historic tourism legislation. Since the first meeting in September of that year, the commission has:

- Developed a six-year strategic plan for statewide tourism development;
- Created a two-year tourism marketing plan;
- Overseen the development and launch of a redesigned state traveler Web site at www.ExperienceWA.com; and
- Established criteria for and launched the Washington tourism competitive grant program.

The next meeting of the Washington State Tourism Commission will be Nov. 21 at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center. A full schedule of meeting dates, locations and agendas (for past meetings) is available on Washington State Tourism’s industry Web site at www.ExperienceWA.com/industry.

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NOTE: Please contact kristinj@cted.wa.gov if you require a headshot of Kimberly Bennett.

To view a complete list of the members of the Washington Tourism Commission, please visit www.ExperienceWA.com/industry and click on “Tourism Commission.”

The Dept. of Community, Trade and Economic Development is the lead state agency charged with enhancing and promoting sustainable community and economic vitality in Washington. For more information, visit www.cted.wa.gov.