



Gilmer Chamber Leaders Select Jennifer Grimmer as President and Chief Executive Officer



Jennifer Grimmer

New Contact Information

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(Ellijay, Georgia) Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce leaders have selected an experienced chamber and tourism professional as the new president and chief executive officer of the business organization. Jennifer Grimmer was unanimously approved by the chamber's board of directors to lead the 650 member chamber which serves as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for East Ellijay, Ellijay and Gilmer County. The Chason Group was retained to lead the executive search for the chamber.

Grimmer previously served as the executive director of the Peachtree City Convention and Visitors Bureau – Atlanta Regional Tourism from 2015 – 2018. She is currently the marketing manager / digital marketing specialist for the Natural Resources and Wildlife Division with the State of Utah in Salt Lake City where she has created and implemented a marketing strategy for the Department of Wildlife Resources.

“The chamber’s search committee was very focused on the qualifications of the candidates we wanted to interview,” according to Chris Wang, 2020 chair. “Chamber, tourism and marketing experiences were dominant skill sets that are required of the president. Jennifer met all of those prerequisites on paper and in person.”

Originally from Oregon and a 2000 graduate of the University of Oregon, Grimmer grew up in a community that depended heavily on small businesses and tourism, similar to East Ellijay, Ellijay and Gilmer County. She has held chamber and tourism positions in Corvallis,

Wilsonville, and Medford/Jackson County, all in Oregon, and Wahkiakum in Washington State. While in Wilsonville, Grimmer founded Oregon Horse Country (OHC) as an arm of the Wilsonville Chamber. The organization focuses on connecting, strengthening and representing the equine industry in the state. Lodging tax for Wilsonville increased by 30% following launch of OHC after its first year in operation. Forming OHC garnered the Core Competency Award from the Western Chamber Executives Association in 2011 for the Wilsonville Chamber.

“The opportunity to return to Georgia and be a part of an organization like the Gilmer Chamber is a dream come true for me,” Grimmer said. “My husband and I are recently empty-nesters and I’m excited to find a position I can pour myself into, make a priority and make a difference. My first initiative will be to listen to the community and build upon the foundations that are already in place in terms of tourism and chamber programs.”

Grimmer's successes in Peachtree City include the founding of the annual Hops and Props Georgia Beer Festival in partnership with the Commemorative Air Force as well as the Annual Wine and Warbirds Festival. She also served on the boards of the Fayette County Chamber and Arts Council of Fayette County. Other accomplishments include graduating from both Leadership Fayette and the Georgia Academy of Economic Development.

"The timing is right to bring Jennifer into the community as our new president," said Wang. "Gilmer County was a great place for people to come spread out during 2020, and we are excited to have a new president bringing fresh ideas for 2021 to continue to market our area as a perfect destination for all people to get away to. Jennifer's expertise can play a large role in furthering the chamber's core values of excellence, member centric, inclusive, proactive leadership, and accountability."

Grimmer and her husband Ben, who served as a United States Marine, plan to move to Gilmer County in the next few weeks. Her first day at the chamber will be February 1.

The chamber board engaged The Chason Group to lead the executive search process. The firm, which is Georgia based, specializes in executive searches for chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, foundations and other non-profits. The placement of Grimmer marks the third Gilmer Chamber president recruited by The Chason Group.

The president's position became vacant in the fall of 2020 when Paige (Green) Hutto resigned her seat to move to Alabama. The Chason Group led the executive search for Hutto as well. She had served the community for 12 years and grown the chamber in both influence and valuable programming.

About the Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce.

Formed in October 1978, the Gilmer Chamber is a 650+ member organization serving the North Georgia communities of Ellijay and East Ellijay. The organization operates as a welcome center, serve as the Destination Marketing Organization for Gilmer County, and provides networking opportunities and business resources for members. As a 501c(6) non-profit, the chamber is funded through the investment of membership, programs, and a contract with local governments to delivery tourism services. Membership is open to any business or individual that believes and supports the mission and program of work.