



Discover Dunwoody Names Ray Ezelle to Executive Director Position



New Contact Information

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(Dunwoody, Georgia) Ray Ezelle, a senior hospitality sales, marketing, event and business development executive, has been named Executive Director of Discover Dunwoody. The Chason Group was retained to lead the executive search for the tourism organization.

“Ray brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to Discover Dunwoody,” according to Alicia Wiley, Chair of the search committee and General Manager of Le Meridien Atlanta Perimeter. “The organization has a strong, solid foundation. As tourism re-emerges from the pandemic, Ray’s leadership is going to be a key component of moving the community forward in terms of growth in revenues for local businesses.”

The mission of Discover Dunwoody is to generate economic development by effectively marketing the facilities of the community and the surrounding areas as a preferred business, convention and tourism destination. The organization partners with the City of Dunwoody to provide these services. Led by an eleven-member Board of Directors and professional staff, Discover Dunwoody had a pre-COVID annual budget of approximately \$1.7 million generated by hotel/motel tax revenues.

Ezelle has served as Vice President of Sales, Sports and Services with Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge, Roanoke, Virginia; Executive Vice President of Business Development, Connections Housing, Suwanee, Georgia; Vice President, Connect Meetings, Norcross, Georgia; and Area Director of Sales and Marketing, PCH Hotels – Resort Collection on Alabama RTJ Golf Trail,

Florence and Montgomery Alabama. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ray founded Total Hospitality Industry Solutions (THIS) in Suwanee.

“The search committee was seeking a professional with a proven tenure in sales and strategic planning, a demonstrated knowledge of standards and best practices for destination marketing organizations, as well as a history of involvement in relevant professional organizations,” said Charlie Augello, Chair of Discover Dunwoody board and owner of E. 48th Street Italian Market. “Ray brings these attributes to the table for the community.”

Ezelle and his wife Stephanie have four sons. Three are attending universities in Georgia and one has just completed his United States Air Force pilot training.

“Becoming a part of the Discover Dunwoody team is extremely exciting for me,” Ezelle said. “I look forward to becoming a partner in the community and building upon the success that was established prior to the pandemic.”

Ezelle is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi.

In addition to Wiley and Augello, Bill Baker, Senior General Manager of Perimeter Mall, and Sharon Kilmartin, Area General Manager of Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia, served on the search committee. All four currently serve on the Board at Discover Dunwoody.

Dunwoody offers 1,768 rooms in nationally acclaimed hotels, with over 300 new rooms currently under construction, and 66,000 square feet of meeting space for the smallest to largest of convention gatherings.

The search process was broken into three phases. The first centered on determining the skill sets and focus points for the position. Board members, government leaders and other stakeholders were interviewed to build an updated position description and a candidate profile. The second phase was casting the net for candidates and specifically identifying professionals who may fit the criteria established. The final segment was an intensive interview process of the candidates best suited for the role.

Discover Dunwoody engaged The Chason Group to lead the executive search process. The firm, which is Georgia based, specializes in executive searches for economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, foundations, and other non-profits.