

## NEWS RELEASE



*Where the Sun Rises  
on the Smokies*

### HAYWOOD COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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#### **NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OFFICIALLY TAKES REINS OF TOURISM AGENCY**

*Lynn Collins, Former Maggie Valley Chamber Director, Makes Transition to Haywood County TDA*

**HAYWOOD COUNTY, N.C. (February 12, 2009)**—Lynn Collins, who served as the executive director of the Maggie Valley Chamber and Area Visitors Bureau since 2005, officially began her duties this month as the new executive director of Haywood County Tourism Development Authority.

“It’s an exciting time,” said Collins, who the Haywood County TDA Board of Directors voted to fill the position in December after an exhaustive search and extensive interview process. “Since being selected, I’ve been preparing to make a smooth transition—attending board meetings and conferring with board members, talking with the staff, and just becoming even more familiar with the workings of the organization than I already was—and it’s paid off already these first couple of weeks.

“I’m extremely pleased that the board recognized the qualities and experience I bring to this role,” Collins said, “and I look forward to doing all I can to continue and further the mission of the TDA in growing economic impact of the tourism industry in the county.”

Collins has more than 30 years of tourism and destination management experience, beginning in 1978 as the director of public relations and promotions at Maggie Valley’s Ghost Town in the Sky and Magic Waters. Later in her career, after six years as the sales and marketing director at the Polk County, Florida, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Collins was promoted to serve as that organization’s executive director—a post she held for 12 years managing a \$6 million budget, a 10-person marketing staff and 50 volunteers. During her tenure, the organization twice received the Convention & Visitors Bureau of the Year award from the Southeast Tourism Society, and visitor inquiries increased 300 percent.

“Her wealth of experience in this industry—especially as the director of a visitors bureau six times the size of the TDA—and her strong familiarity with the area, the county and the TDA are really tremendous assets to have in an executive director,” said Alice Aumen, chairman of the Haywood County Board of Directors. “We are thrilled to have her aboard and look forward to working with her in the coming months and years.”

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Collins, a resident of Maggie Valley, served as a TDA board member from 1983 to 1985, is only the second executive director in the organization's history.

"There are a lot of great things already in place here," Collins said. "I think my fresh take and some new approaches will only help us continually progress, and I am eager to forge new relationships and partnerships with individuals, businesses and other organizations throughout the county and region in order to reach our goals."

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