



Chamber, Hospitality Associations Announce Innovative Partnership

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MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. – A ground-breaking partnership between the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, the Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association, the Hospitality Association of South Carolina, the National Restaurant Association and the American Hotel & Lodging Association was announced at a press conference at the chamber's Oak Street office today (Nov. 16). The partnership is the first of its kind in the United States involving a local chamber and local, state and national hospitality organizations.

A main component of the partnership grants hospitality industry businesses that are members of the chamber automatic membership in the local hospitality association and hospitality industry businesses that are members of the local hospitality association automatic membership in the chamber. These businesses, which include accommodations and lodging, golf courses, nightclubs, restaurants and theaters, among others, also gain membership to the state hospitality association. Plus, restaurant, nightclub and lodging businesses will become members of either the National Restaurant Association or the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

“This is a unique and innovative partnership between organizations that represent the business community,” said Wayne Gray, chamber chairman. “The partnership will increase legislative visibility and lobbying power on the local, state and national levels and will add educational and networking opportunities for our members.”

The partnership also will allow the local hospitality association to return to its roots as a trade organization for the hospitality industry, positioning the organization to have greater influence on issues affecting the industry.

“This is a positive step toward better serving the hospitality industry,” said Scott Harrelson, president of the Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association. “Working together

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will enhance each other's efforts, bringing increased benefits to our membership and the business community."

Both organizations will continue to report to their respective board of directors but will work closely together on issues related to the local hospitality industry.

The partnership also allows the Hospitality Association of South Carolina and the national associations the opportunity to add more members from the Grand Strand to their organizations.

"The partnership fits perfectly with our vision to strengthen our organization and aggressively represent the interests of the South Carolina hospitality community," said Woody Crosby, chairman of the Hospitality Association of South Carolina. "We consider ourselves the voice of the industry, and we welcome membership and input from the Myrtle Beach area."

To help the business community understand the importance of the partnership, the Web site HospitalityPartnership.com was developed by the partners to outline benefits and answer questions.

The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has stood for 65 years as the unified voice of the Grand Strand's business community. The chamber serves Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach, Surfside Beach, Little River, Atlantic Beach, Garden City Beach, Loris, Conway, Aynor, Murrells Inlet, Litchfield Beach and Pawleys Island.

The Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association was started in 1974 and provides information and education to its members on all vital industry issues. The Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association advocates the industry's needs to ensure a healthy tourism economy.

The Hospitality Association of South Carolina, a statewide, nonpartisan trade organization, was founded in 1993 when the South Carolina Hotel & Motel Association and the South Carolina Restaurant Association united under the common umbrella of the Hospitality Association of South Carolina. The hospitality association's mission is to promote, protect and educate the foodservice and lodging industries of the state and to ensure positive business growth for its members. The association also strives to represent the best interests of its members on small business issues, hospitality and tourism concerns and toward the protection of South Carolina's quality of life.