

# Tourism Office targets tourist dollars with creation of new commission

## *Vancouver USA Regional Sports Commission to assist in marketing for tourist-rich sporting events*

BY NICHOLAS SHANNON KULMAC | VBJ

In an effort to increase the amount of tourism dollars spent in Clark County, officials have created a new sports commission that will serve as a catalyst for attracting and promoting local sports events and tournaments.

The commission was formed earlier this week with a vote by the Board of Directors of the Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office. The newly-formed Vancouver USA Regional Sports Commission will serve as a special advisory committee to the board.

"In our work with sports planners and tournament directors, it has become clear that an expanded local network of sports-related industry professionals can help us grow this market larger and take it

to the next level in terms of marketing our destination for sporting events," said Kim Bennett, president and CEO of the Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office, in an email to the Vancouver Business Journal.

As the region's sports facilities, parks and natural venues become

"This, in turn, supports jobs in our community and increases sales tax that is used by our local government to pay for roads and services such as police and fire," she said.

The primary goals and objectives of the sports commission include coordinating

and providing a forum for the continued recognition of sports as a positive force in improving the quality of life in the Clark County area.

The sports commission will be comprised of 20 to 30 individuals from across Clark County. SpringHill Suites by Marriott General Manager Alison Hite is one of them.

"I don't think people realize the economic impact tourism has," said Hite. "It's huge to our area – not only to our hotels, but for restaurants, shopping and everything."

In recent years, according to Hite, sports commissions have become part of the bidding process for tournaments and events because "you have to get a little more detailed in going after them."

"If you want to bid on events, usually a sports commission has to start that process and put in an official bid," she said. "That's what we've been missing in Clark County."

In addition to Bennett and Hite, initial members of the Vancouver USA Regional Sports Commission include Brian McClary (Heathman Lodge); Charles Guthrie (Clark College); Peter Mayer (Vancouver-Clark County Parks and Recreation); and Dave Sobolik (Fit Right Northwest).

The initial members of the sports commission are expected to meet in February. Parties interested in serving on the commission are encouraged to contact the Vancouver USA Regional Sports Commission at [sports@vancouverusasports.com](mailto:sports@vancouverusasports.com). **VBJ**

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~Alison Hite, SpringHill Suites by Marriott GM & initial member of the Vancouver USA Regional Sports Commission

better known by event and tournament organizers, Bennett said the number of visitors will increase – visitors who spend money in our community on everything from lodging to meals to shopping to fueling their car.

resources in the community to increase and enhance the success of sports events and tournaments; providing education and information to the general public on the benefits of investing in sports competitions and venues;