



News Release

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Tuesday, September 24, 2024

Visit SoSi's Lisa Meriwether Awarded Destination Marketing Organization Employee of the Year

Visit SoSi Tourism Manager, Lisa Meriwether, was honored for her statewide impact on the local tourism economy by the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association at the 2024 "Ordinary Awards," held at the Richmond Marriott, Downtown earlier this month.

Lisa Meriwether, Visit SoSi Tourism Manager, has been honored with the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association (VRLTA) Jim Ricketts Award for Destination Marketing Employee of the Year. The recognition was bestowed at the 2024 Ordinary Awards in Richmond on Thursday, September 12, 2024.

Judged by a panel of industry peers, VRLTA recognizes the top individuals and organizations that contribute extraordinary and outsized effort and impact on Virginia's statewide tourism industry each year.

"This is a profound honor and a pinnacle moment in my professional journey," Meriwether said. "I had the incredible privilege of knowing Jim Ricketts, so earning this recognition, named in his honor, is incredibly meaningful, and deeply humbling. I also have the distinct privilege of collaborating with a remarkable team of individuals who are all tirelessly dedicated to introducing Danville and Pittsylvania County, Virginia, the Visit SoSi region, to visitors every single day. This is truly a team effort and it's pretty incredible to see what can happen when everyone pulls in the same direction."

Meriwether has spent more than 40 years in hospitality, sales, and tourism. She has held key sales positions with major hotel chains and luxury properties such as the AAA Five Diamond and Forbes



Five Star Jefferson Hotel in Richmond. She previously served as the Vice President of Tourism for the Lynchburg Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau and Tourism Sales Manager for the Office of Economic Development & Tourism for the City of Lynchburg, Virginia before relocating to Danville to help launch Danville and Pittsylvania County’s new tourism program.

“I am thrilled to see Lisa honored in this way,” Danville City Manager, Ken Larking said. “Lisa’s leadership in developing and promoting our regional tourism marketing effort is exceptional. She and others in the Office of Economic Development and Tourism built up a program that first sought to remind locals of the great assets in our community and now seeks to share our area to outsiders. With this award, it is obvious that their collective effort is paying off for our region.”

“Lisa has done an extraordinary job in building a strong foundation for the regional Visit SoSi tourism program,” said Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism Director, Corrie Bobe. “Alongside her dedicated team, Lisa has worked tirelessly to foster a vibrant sense of community and identity through the implementation of the Visit SoSi brand. Their efforts in promoting the region’s quality of life have not only engaged stakeholders but also positioned Southern Virginia as an attractive destination for visitors and locals alike.”

More than \$900 million in tourism industry investment has recently been secured in the Visit SoSi footprint and, just last week, the City announced 2023 performance data which notably included a 50% year-over-year increase in the economic impact of tourism spending across the region.

This award for Meriwether follows two other notable statewide honors. In July, Meriwether was appointed to serve a six-year term as a member of the Virginia Tourism Authority’s Board of Directors by Governor Glenn Youngkin and, in December of 2023, she was awarded Associate Member of the Year by the Virginia Society of Association Executives.

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About the Office of Economic Development & Tourism

The Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism is responsible for leading the city of Danville’s tourism efforts by branding and promoting the City and Pittsylvania County to differentiate it from other regional competitors through advertising, promotions, trade events, and visitor experience initiatives to stimulate economic growth for the region.



About the Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association

The Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association is the unified voice of the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and other support.