

# STAFF REPORT

## City of Lancaster

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12/08/09
MVB

DATE: December 8, 2009

TO: Mayor Parris and Members of the City Council

FROM: Vern Lawson Jr., Economic Development/Redevelopment Director

SUBJECT: **Appointment of City of Lancaster representatives to the board of directors of the Visitors Bureau of Lancaster, Destination Lancaster.**

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### **Recommendation:**

Appoint one Council Member as the Council Representative and Randy Miranda, the General Manager of the Hampton Inn & Suites Hotel, as the hospitality representative to the Board of Directors of the Visitors Bureau of Lancaster (the "Visitors Bureau" or "Destination Lancaster").

### **Fiscal Impact:**

None

### **Background:**

On October 13, 2009, the City Council unanimously approved the formation of Destination Lancaster in partnership with the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds.

The City and the Antelope Valley Fair have partnered to create Destination Lancaster which represents the City as a destination location and hub to adventure tourism. The purpose of creating Destination Lancaster is to promote the City as a location with many diverse assets and amenities and to encourage spending from visitors on day trips, overnight stays, special events and sports activities. The City and the surrounding area offer unique and diverse opportunities to expand a visitor base in the Antelope Valley. Destination Lancaster helps differentiate the City from the rest of Southern California with the Boulevard, adventure sports and aerospace to name a few. The revitalization of Lancaster Boulevard will provide a unique competitive differentiator to the City. Along with providing a festive atmosphere and promoting new entrepreneurial activity, the Boulevard will prove to be a main attraction in the City's long list of amenities.

Destination Lancaster aims to promote new business creation and hotel attraction by creating a demand for additional tourism opportunities and building upon an existing successful sports tourism base. A study conducted during the original City brand research shows that the average visitor to the City is of an affluent demographic and therefore, an expanded visitor base equals an expanded tax base. The desert, which we typically take for granted, is large draw to those visitors who do not live in or near it, particularly European visitors who are known for visiting Death Valley. These visitors will not only patronize the hotels but the retailers and restaurants as well during their stay.

**Summary:**

Destination Lancaster is a partnership between the City of Lancaster and the Antelope Valley Fair to promote a local tourism economic base. The bureau will be initially housed in the Antelope Valley Fair administration building. Ultimately, Destination Lancaster and the public visitor center will be located in downtown Lancaster. Per the Letter of Understanding, Destination Lancaster is run by a five member board consisting of: one (1) Antelope Valley Fair board member; one (1) City Council member; the Antelope Valley Fair's General Manager; the City's Economic Development Director; and one (1) hospitality industry representative as appointed by the City's Mayor (with the consent of a majority of the City Council). Destination Lancaster's board will receive input from a group of industry stakeholders which will meet regularly to provide ideas and input. Established as a non-profit corporation, the day-to-day operations of Destination Lancaster will be managed by a director, an employee of the Visitors Bureau.

Staff recommends that the City Council appoint one council member and Randy Miranda, the general manager of the Hampton Inn & Suites hotel, as the City representatives to the board of the Visitors Bureau of Lancaster.

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