



The Chamber Took Key Role in Founding DCVB

Tuesday, January 6th will mark the 20th anniversary of the first meeting of the Tourism Development Authority, governing board of the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau, Durham's marketing agency. Former Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce executives Bob Booth and Frank Smiley, working with Karl Lack, General Manager of the then Governors Inn in RTP, now called the Radisson RTP, represented the private and independent sectors in getting DCVB off the ground.

The Chamber is a private advocacy group for business which contracts with the County to recruit new or relocating businesses as another form of economic development.



The Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau was authorized and funded as a provision to 1986 state legislation. According to documents at the time, the Chamber pushed to make sure a portion of the tax, as is customary, went to marketing and that DCVB was chartered as an independent authority with governance appointed by the City Council and Board of County Commissioners. Over a period of 30 months after the legislation was enacted and levied, an Interlocal Agreement between the City Council, led by then Mayor and current TDA member Wib Gulley, and the Board of County Commissioners, led by then Chair and now City Mayor Bill Bell, was shaped with Chamber input. Members of the TDA were appointed in December 1988 and held their first meeting January 6, 1989.

The then seven- member Authority elected the late H.C. Cranford, a Blue Cross Blue Shield executive as Chairman, and the group immediately launched a nationwide search for a seasoned destination marketing executive, which culminated in May with the hiring of Reyn Bowman as CEO.

The Chamber Board under Chairmen Travis Porter '84, Frank Ward '85, KvR. Dey '86, Bill Stokes '87, and Wayne Hayes '88 also pushed for creation of DCVB as an independent agency to market and tell the Durham story.