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NEWS SERVICE

**DURHAM**

*Where great things happen*



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DURHAM CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

*20 Years of Visitor-Related Economic & Cultural Development*

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January 11, 2009

A new year, a new decade, a new President.

We thought it would be appropriate to have the first Durham News Service release of 2010 be a letter to the community, talking about the direction DCVB is heading in with new leadership, what things will change, what will stay the same, etc.

DCVB is in the economic development business. Visitor-centric economic and cultural development, to be more precise. Unlike what you may think of in traditional economic development though, we don't build things so people will come, we get people to come so we can support the things we build.



*A letter from DCVB's new  
President & CEO, Shelly Green*

As Durham's marketing agency, DCVB deploys all kinds of strategies and tactics to get visitors to come to Durham and spend money, leaving in their wake businesses that are profitable, jobs for our citizens, and millions in tax revenue for local governments.

Before talking about the future, it is necessary to touch on the reality of where we are. Staffing has gone from 25 to 15; DCVB's budget has dropped by more than a million dollars in less than two years. We feel the urgency of needing to do more and more...but have had less and less with which to do it. The good news is that there have been several indications that things are turning around in recent weeks. People are traveling again and increased spending will soon follow.

So priority number one is to, well, prioritize. There will be some things we will do differently. We're going to spend some time simplifying the messages we communicate to visitors. We also plan to re-analyze all of our different audiences, and look at ways of getting messages to them more frequently and through multiple communication tools. Here's a brief explanation of [why I think that](#).

Like my predecessor, I'm a data and information junkie. So don't count on that changing. [Here's why in laymen's terms](#). But suffice it to say that when you are spending a considerable amount of money—the community's money—I believe we need to know (not

just think) we are spending it wisely.

Several people have asked me if I was going to continue to be as focused on protecting Durham's identity and brand, and if I saw Durham cooperating more in the region. Protecting one's brand is the core of destination marketing. I'm not sure how we could cooperate more than we already do in all of the places it makes sense, but I'm open to listening, as I hope those with a regional mindset will be, too. Maybe this will help [explain how I see things](#).



I'm really fortunate to have a fabulous, talented staff to work with who are some of the best in the business. Unlike other CEOs who come into a new job in a new destination with a new staff, I have had the pleasure of both working with and even hiring most of the folks in the office.

They know I have a passion for Durham, but also recognize I'm outwardly very calm, usually unflappable, and someone who likes to work her plan and plan her work. They rolled out the red carpet for me when I moved into my new office and gave me a tiara as a humorously symbolic gesture of recognizing my new role.

In closing, I want to thank the Tourism Development Authority, DCVB's governing body, for having confidence in me and allowing me the opportunity to move into this position. Thanks too, to my 14 year old daughter, Samantha, for being such a great kid and for understanding that I really LIKE to work on the weekends sometimes. Most importantly, I want to thank Reyn who has been a friend and mentor to me for 20 years now. He's taught me a lot and I owe him a huge debt of gratitude.

I hope you'll feel free to call me or email me anytime with your thoughts and ideas. We want to continue to improve and evolve. One way you can give me feedback right now is to [take five minutes to tell us what works and what doesn't work for you](#) about the Durham News Service e-newsletter.

Thanks. Here's to a great new year.

Curious about how I got to be in destination marketing? [Here's my story](#).

Shelly Green  
President & CEO

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[Durham News Service](#) is a service of the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau, an internationally accredited local tourism development authority and the official destination marketing organization for

Durham, North Carolina, including Research Triangle Park.

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