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Governor Laura Kelly Proposes Agency Reorganization to Spur Economic Growth

Jan 25, 2021

Governor Laura Kelly today announced her intent to submit an Executive Reorganization Order (ERO) to the Kansas Legislature relocating the State's Tourism Division to the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The move comes as the result of input from businesses, destination marketing organizations and other key industry partners, including the Travel Industry Association of Kansas (TIAK), The Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association (KRHA), and the Kansas Economic Development Alliance (KEDA), to consolidate Kansas' tourism efforts primarily as an economic development tool.

"Consolidating our Tourism focus within the Department of Commerce sends a clear message to our industry partners and prospective companies that this administration will use every tool at our disposal to spur new economic development," **Governor Laura Kelly said.** "This realignment will benefit our business community, our tourism industry, and Kansas's economic recovery as a whole."

“This is a move the tourism industry has supported and it is the right time for this change,” **TIAK President Jim Zaleski, Labette County CVB said**. “Kansas Tourism and the Department of Commerce have a shared goal of bringing revenue into the state. A coordinated marketing effort will help establish and promote a consistent, strong state brand and a single “front door” to Kansas.”

“The Kanas Restaurant & Hospitality Association agrees the Kansas hospitality community will be best served by having our Travel and Tourism efforts within the Kansas Department of Commerce**,” Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association President Adam Mills said.** “At a time when hospitality needs every reform possible this reorganization will reposition us as we grow out of the recent strains of the pandemic.”

“The KEDA Board supports the ERO to move tourism promotion back to the Kansas Department of Commerce and believes that, utilizing the expertise and outreach of the state’s lead economic development agency, the move will increase awareness of tourism opportunities among visitors to our state,” **President of the Kansas Economic Development Alliance, Steve Jack said**. “Our organization serves 76 Kansas communities and counties, and we see the positive impact of the Department of Commerce’s efforts every day across the state. We are confident that Commerce will bring a similar spark to our state’s tourism.”

The Tourism Division will be housed within Business Development at the Kansas Department of Commerce. The Department already features several tools aimed at increasing tourism, including the Kansas Athletic Commission and the STAR Bond program.

“This move will create a more robust, centralized effort to attract Tourism to the state of Kansas,” **Lieutenant Governor and Commerce Secretary David Toland said**. “I appreciate the work that the Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) has put into this vital program, and I’m excited to see our team pursue new possibilities to increase tourism to Kansas.”

As a result of the ERO, the KDWPT will be designated as the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP).

“It’s exciting to see Tourism being positioned as a key part of our state’s economic development strategy,” **KDWPT Secretary Brad Loveless said.** “I fully support this decision and look forward to continued collaboration with the talented Tourism Division staff to promote our state’s wonderful natural resources.”

Governor Kelly will submit the ERO to the Kansas Legislature on Jan.25. The ERO becomes effective on July 1, following its transmittal to the Legislature, unless within 60 calendar days of transmittal, either the Senate or House adopts a resolution disapproving it.

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