



## **MEDIA CONTACT**

Rachel Ward Oppermann

Visit Estes Park

[roppermann@visitestepark.com](mailto:roppermann@visitestepark.com)

970-586-0500 x 1221

## **VISIT ESTES PARK HIRES KARA FRANKER AS CEO**

**ESTES PARK, Colo. (April 2020)** The Visit Estes Park Board of Directors has appointed Kara Franker for the position of Chief Executive Officer of Visit Estes Park (VEP). Franker will lead the strategic planning and execution of all operations including tourism marketing initiatives, stakeholder communications, government relations, staff management, financials and community engagement efforts. She will serve as the lead spokesperson for the destination regionally and nationally, and will report to the VEP Board of Directors. She starts the position in early May.

"Kara's background in leadership in the tourism industry, strategic marketing and communications, and her love for Estes Park, makes her exceptionally qualified for this position," says Deborah Gibson, Chair of the VEP Board of Directors and General Manager at Rams Horn Village Resort. "We're thrilled to welcome her as CEO."

In her new role, Franker looks forward to working with town stakeholders and the VEP staff. "I can't wait to meet everyone in the community and to learn from their various experiences," says Franker. "The town is full of vibrant community stakeholders who love Estes Park. That energy is contagious."

Franker brings more than 14 years of leadership and creative communications experience to her new role. Before accepting the position with VEP, she served as the Senior Vice President of Marketing & Communications at Visit Lauderdale in South Florida, where she managed global destination promotions, integrated advertising campaigns, social media, public relations, website development and a new brand roll-out.

Prior to her executive role at Visit Lauderdale, Franker founded and led her own communications and marketing firm, which provided marketing strategy, team management, client promotion and content creation services to destination marketing organizations, as well as hotels, restaurants and attractions. A seasoned journalist, Franker has been featured as a travel expert for Coastal Living, Condé Nast Traveler, Travel + Leisure, Travel Channel, Travelocity, Orbitz, HGTV, Huffington Post and more. Additionally, she is the editor-in-chief of two print magazines for the award-winning Modern Luxury network of publications. A licensed attorney, Franker earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Denver, Sturm College of Law. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in journalism and strategic communications from the University of Kansas, William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

And importantly, she knows Estes Park well. Having visited it for years with her family she is excited to make it her home. "Estes Park is truly Colorado's original playground," says Franker. "There is so much to see and do and I plan to experience it all."

Overall, Franker is thrilled to leverage her experience as the new CEO of VEP. "This is a dream job," says Franker. "And I can't wait to get started."

###