



Director of Sales & Event Services Retires From Von Braun Center

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Huntsville, Ala. (September 30, 2024) – After 35 years of working in Huntsville’s hospitality and tourism sector, Von Braun Center (VBC) Director of Sales and Event Services, Marie Arighi, announced her retirement set for January 1, 2025.

“This year marks my 35th anniversary working in hospitality and tourism,” said Marie. “Twenty-five of those years were spent at the Von Braun Center.”

Marie began her career in the hospitality and tourism industry in 1989 at Yedla Management’s Howard Johnson in Madison then transitioned to Hilton Huntsville in 1990 as the Senior Sales Manager. She returned to Yedla Management as the Director of Sales & Marketing at Country Inn & Suites by Radisson before landing at the Von Braun Center in 1999.

“We are very fortunate to have had Marie on our team for so many years – not just the team at the VBC, but the entire Huntsville community has been fortunate,” said VBC Executive Director Steve Maples. “I’m honored to have had the opportunity to work alongside Marie. When you’ve worked together for as many years as we have, you become like family. I’ve never met anyone more passionate about Huntsville and the VBC. No matter the situation, Marie has a relentless positivity that is infectious and makes everyone around her want to make the impossible possible – for us and for our clients. Her leadership, knowledge and expertise have played a major role in the success of the VBC and Huntsville’s growth.”

Throughout her 25 years of service at the Von Braun Center, Marie has helped secure hundreds of conventions and tradeshow, bringing thousands of attendees to the venue.

“Marie has helped bring conferences and conventions to the VBC which has benefitted the city as a whole for her entire career,” said VBC Assistant Director Mike Vojticek. “Our success would not have been achievable without her ongoing dedication and enthusiasm. It has been a pleasure to work with her!”

While selling space within the VBC and working alongside the team at the Huntsville-Madison County Convention and Visitors Bureau to sell Huntsville to meeting planners, Marie has continued professional development through ongoing training. She is a Certified Government Meeting Professional through the



Society of Government Meeting Professionals, a Certified Hospitality Sales Professional through the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute, and a Certified Meeting Professional through the Events Industry Council. She is also certified through the Cvent Supplier Network and is recognized as a Government Meeting Specialist by the Rocket City Society of Government Meeting Professionals. She is a Leadership Greater Huntsville alumnus and completed Venue Management School through the International Association of Venue Managers, as well as Senior Executive Symposium from Cornell University School of Hospitality.

Marie continued, “Looking back and remembering achievements throughout my career, one of things I’m most proud of is serving on the steering committee in 2009 to establish the local chapter of the Society of Government Meeting Professionals. That experience taught me so much and led to many connections and friendships along the way.”

Over the years, Marie has routinely volunteered her time and talents to different organizations within the community. She has been an active member of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) where she received in 2019 the Region 3 Outstanding Achievement Award; and the Society of Government Meeting Professionals where she was recognized nationally as Supplier of the Year and received the President’s Award on the national level during their annual conference at the VBC during the COVID pandemic. Additionally, she has been an active member of Hospitality Sales and Marketing Executives; Women in Defense – Tennessee Valley Chapter; the Huntsville/Madison County Hospitality Association (former Board member) where she received the Red Ribbon Award in 2007; the Alabama Council of Association Executives; the Alabama Automotive Manufacturing Association; AAAA – Tennessee Valley Chapter; and the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association where she was honored as a String of Pearls Leader in 2022.

“When Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association chose me as a String of Pearls Leader I was deeply honored. Being recognized in such a way by my peers and leaders in our industry is something I will always treasure,” said Marie.

The VBC Board of Control will initiate a comprehensive process including a national search for the next qualified Director of Sales candidate. Interested applicants are encouraged to review the job description posted on the VBC’s website at vonbrauncenter.com.

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About Von Braun Center

For nearly 50 years, the Von Braun Center has been a space for people to gather and create shared experiences. As a multi-purpose facility located in downtown Huntsville, Alabama, the VBC offers multiple venues for presenting cultural, educational, entertainment, sporting and social events. Venue spaces include the Propst Arena, Mark C. Smith Concert Hall, The Playhouse, Mars Music Hall, South Hall, East Hall, and Saturn Ballroom. Additionally, the VBC has an on-site restaurant and rooftop bar – Rhythm on Monroe. With over 170,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, the VBC accommodates events of all types and sizes. As technology evolves, the Von Braun Center continues to bring people together for in-person moments.