

Rejuvenate



2012 INDUSTRY LEADERS



Rejuvenate 2012 Industry Leaders

Every year, we ask our industry partners to nominate people from their destinations or venues to be recognized as industry leaders. This year, the names of 34 people landed on our desks, and despite their different job responsibilities, career paths and places of work, they all have a few things in common. First, they're committed to growing and improving the meetings and events industry, as evidenced by their career accomplishments and goals. They're looked up to by their peers and colleagues, the people who chose them to be featured. They value their families, mentors and co-workers who help them achieve what they set out to do, and they rely on their communities and organizations to provide input and advice on how to move their destinations and companies forward. They haven't done it alone, but all the people you'll meet on the following pages have become leading voices for progress and growth in the faith-based meetings and events industry.

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Ross H. Powell

Director of Sales

➤ Explore Gwinnett/Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau
Duluth, Ga.

Before joining the Gwinnett CVB six years ago, Ross Powell spent more than 23 years in the sales and marketing management and consulting side of conference centers, resorts, and large urban chain and independently managed hotels.

▶ **Accomplishments:**

Powell has his CDME certification, is on the board of directors for the American Cancer Society and Lawrenceville Kiwanis Club, and is both a graduate and member of the steering committee of the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Gwinnett program. He received his master's degree in administration of leisure and environmental resources, and is a recipient of the organizational leadership excellence certification from the Cunningham Center for Leadership Development at Columbus State University.

▶ **First Job:**

Multiple district executive, Boy Scouts of America

▶ **Favorite Free-Time Activity:**

Antique furniture restoration, family travels

▶ **Favorite Quote:**

"Yesterday is history, dead and buried. Tomorrow is a mystery, waiting to unfold. Today is your canvas, waiting to be painted, that's why we call it your 'present.'"

▶ **Industry Mentor:**

Burt Cabanas, CEO, Benchmark Management

▶ **Hero:**

Teddy Roosevelt



Thomas B. Riford

President and CEO

➤ Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Hagerstown, Md.

Thomas B. Riford happily touts the Hagerstown area's offerings: five national parks, eight state parks, more than 30 museums, and Maryland's No. 1 shopping destination ranking. A graduate of Cornell University, Riford is a decorated U.S. Marine Corps veteran, 2004 Business Volunteer of the Year Award winner, and 1989 CBS Radio News Reporter of the Year. In 1994, Riford set a world record for most vertical feet skied in a four-hour period. The former pro racer teaches skiing part-time at a local ski resort and is an examiner in the Professional Ski Instructors of America.

▶ **Accomplishments:**

Hagerstown-Washington County is home to Civil War battlefields, including Antietam National Battlefield, as well as Fort Frederick State Park. Conferences and groups come to explore history and heritage, and meet where history happened. The CVB was awarded a State of Maryland Heritage Tourism Award from Governor Martin O'Malley. In 2012, tourism has grown to its highest level in the past decade.

▶ **Industry mentor:**

Edward L. Bernays, public relations pioneer

▶ **What Others Say:**

"There's nobody who can sell Hagerstown-Washington County like Tom Riford can."
—Robert Bruchey II, Mayor, Hagerstown, Md.

▶ **First Jobs:**

Family dairy; local community theater company

▶ **Favorite Free-Time Activity:**

Skiing and biking

▶ **Major life goal:**

Live to be at least 92

