



Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders announced that Dalaney Thomas, a former tourism account manager for CJRW of Little Rock, will be director of tourism at the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage & Tourism.

“Dalaney has spent nearly a decade working with Arkansas Tourism from the outside, brainstorming new ideas to get the word out about our state,” Sanders said in a news release. “She’s spearheaded nationwide marketing campaigns and has the creative chops we’ll need to compete with other states.

“Dalaney joins an incredible team that is going to help us take our state to the next level. This administration is making sweeping reforms to make our outdoor spaces even better.” Thomas takes over at tourism after the June departure of Travis Napper, who had led the division since April 2020.

Napper resigned to take a job as director of destination partnerships at Tourism Economics of Philadelphia, a company that provides research and data to the tourism industry.

“I love Arkansas and am honored and humbled to serve as Director of Tourism,” Thomas said. “Travelers are seeking authentic experiences and we have that in abundance in Arkansas. Tourism is Arkansas’ second-largest industry and I look forward to helping grow that economy by encouraging continuous product development and through expanding our reach into new markets, thereby introducing more people to our wonderful Natural State.” Shea Lewis, secretary of the state Department of Parks, Heritage & Tourism, called Thomas “a natural fit” for the job.

“With her passion for outdoor recreation, communities across the state, destinations, attractions, and promotion of the Natural State, her efforts will continue to build on the fact that Arkansas is a great place to visit, live and work,” Lewis said.

Thomas most recently worked as a senior account manager at advertising and marketing agency CJRW, where she has overseen two of the agency's largest accounts: the state Department of Tourism and Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort in Hot Springs. Thomas was elected to the agency's board of directors earlier this year. She is a member of the 2019 Arkansas Business 20 In Their 20's class.