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City of Perry Appoints Ashley Hardin As Economic Development Director

The mayor and city council of the City of Perry, Georgia have selected an experienced professional to serve as economic development director. Ashley Hardin, currently a Shawnee, Kansas resident, will start her new role on October 9. The approval this week by the city is the culmination of a nationwide search for candidates.

“Ashley has the skill sets, experience and proven track record we were looking for in a professional to lead economic development for the city of Perry,” according to Mayor Jimmy Faircloth. “I believe she will be a great asset to our community’s team when recruiting new businesses to the area and, most importantly, to the existing employers who have made Perry what we are today. Her expertise in downtown development and working with entrepreneurs who have an interest in starting new businesses are just a few of the reasons we have selected her for the position.”



Ashley Hardin

Hardin has served as special projects & grants director / economic development coordinator for the Leavenworth County Development Corporation in Leavenworth, Kansas since 2013. She developed business retention and expansions methods, including an implementation model, within the county and four municipalities located in the Kansas City Metro Area. Hardin’s responsibilities have also included working with national site selection projects, grants, local and state incentive programs and responding to requests for proposals. She also built relationships with Kansas City Kansas Community College, University of St. Mary, Leavenworth Unified School District and utility partners to address workforce development opportunities.

As a graduate of Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, Hardin has continued her education through the Oklahoma University Economic Development Institute. She is a current member of the International Economic Development Council, Kansas City Area Development Council and the Kansas Economic Development Agency. Hardin serves on the boards of the Basehor Chamber of Commerce, Tonganoxie Chamber of Commerce and Grow Leavenworth County E-Community.

Hardin has held other positions with Stephens Media, Inc. and the Spring Hill Chamber of Commerce in Spring Hill, Tennessee.

“The opportunity to move my family back to the southeastern United States is very exciting,” says Hardin. “My visit to Perry, mixed with the research I conducted, and interaction with the city’s elected and appointed leaders really convinced me this is the right setting for me to add value to the community in terms of economic development. It is also a great chance to raise our family in a progressive area with great schools and infrastructure that appeals to us as parents.”

Hardin and her husband, Greg, will be moving to Perry in the next few months with their daughters Taylor, 3, and Callie, 1.

As a city department head, the director of economic developer in Perry serves as the liaison between the mayor and council, other department heads and the business community. Hardin will be responsible for the planning, development, implementation, monitoring and assessment of all economic development activities for the city. Key focus areas will include small business development, entrepreneurship, redevelopment, downtown development, industrial development in conjunction with the Houston County Development Authority and community engagement. Specific areas of concentration for Hardin will include the Classic Main Street Program, Downtown Development Authority, Communications and Special Events for the city.

The economic development director position became open in March 2018 when mayor and council appointed Robert Smith as assistant city manager. Smith was leading the economic development department.

A nationwide search for candidates was conducted by The Chason Group, a Georgia-based executive search firm specializing in economic development, chambers of commerce, foundations and other non-profit organizations.