

Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc. Names Karl Heck as President and CEO

(Franklin, Virginia) The Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc. (FSEDI) Board of Directors has named Karl Heck, an experienced economic developer, as their new President and Chief Executive Officer. Heck has already started his new role in Franklin, Virginia. The Chason Group led the executive search process for the economic development organization.

“The board took a very strategic approach in identifying candidates to lead FSEDI,” according to Harrell Turner, former Chairman of the Board. “Our goal was to find a professional who has the economic development background that will move our community forward in terms of job growth and development of our tax base. Karl has a strong history in the field and the industry expertise to lead FSEDI.”

Heck has been a part of the Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning in Catskill, New York since 2003. He most recently served as the Director of Economic Development and Planning.

Other positions Heck has held include Deputy Director, Cortland Housing Authority in Cortland, New York and Community/Economic Development Specialist for the Tompkins County Planning Department in Ithaca, New York.

“I truly enjoy working in rural communities,” Heck said. “I understand the importance of finding workforce, developing infrastructure and other challenges to economic development in a community like Franklin Southampton. I look forward to working with the FSEDI team on strategizing how we can build upon the solid foundation already in place for long-term economic vitality.”

Heck earned a bachelor’s degree in Economics and Political Science from Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York. He then received a master’s degree in Planning from the University of Toronto in Canada.

As an avid chess player, Heck was inducted into the New York State Chess Hall of Fame in 2012. He has also been extremely involved with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce in Catskill, including serving as Secretary-Treasurer for the business organization.



New Contact Information

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FSEDI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving as the point of contact for all aspects of economic development initiatives including commercial, professional, and industrial marketing to new businesses, maintaining, and growing the investments of existing companies, supporting local small business and entrepreneurial efforts, and managing the area's tourism brand.

The organization is both funded and endorsed by the following entities: The Camp Family Foundations, The City of Franklin, Franklin Southampton Charities and Southampton County.

As President and Chief Executive Officer, Heck will be responsible for directing, coordinating, and administering economic development activities throughout the City of Franklin and Southampton County to expand the local tax base, retain and attract businesses to the area and market the community's attractiveness for investment purposes. Specific responsibilities include encouraging the expansion and establishment of commercial, professional, and industrial businesses and providing support for entrepreneurial endeavors. He will represent FSEDI at meetings with clients and work with various local, regional, and state partners.

"This has been a team initiative by the community," Turner said. "The FSEDI Board, City Council, County Board of Supervisors and the Franklin-Southampton Area Chamber have all been at the table during the search process. As a group, we are committed to playing a positive role in the future of our community."

Ashley Covington, a member of FSEDI for eight years, served as Interim President and CEO since November 2020. She will transition to her former role as Marketing and Existing Business Manager.