



Megan Smith Named President of Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation

(Okeechobee, Florida) Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation leaders have named their first president and chief executive officer. Megan Smith is set to take the lead of the newly formed public-private partnership today, March 25. The executive search for Smith was conducted by The Chason Group (www.thechasongroup.com).

“The board of directors has been very focused on finding the right professional to take the helm as the inaugural leader of the OCEDC,” according to Frank Irby, chair of the organization. “We believe Megan has the right skill sets to set our strategic plan in motion to prepare for job growth and improving the local economy.”

Smith most recently served as vice president for business development at the Coastal Alabama Business Chamber in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Her key responsibilities included the development and implementation of a five-year strategic plan called Advantage Coastal Alabama (ACA). Smith was charged with coordinating, communicating and implementing ACA’s objectives through business advocacy and support, education and workforce development, infrastructure and transportation planning, conservation and natural resources review, and new business development.



Megan Smith

“The opportunity to be a part of building a new economic development program is very exciting to me,” says Smith. “I look forward to becoming a part of the team focused on putting together the right components for a successful initiative in Okeechobee. The momentum that has been established by the OCEDC is the first step in terms of key ingredients.”

Smith is a graduate of the University of South Alabama with a Bachelor of Science, Computer Science; Georgia College and State University, Masters of Public Administration; US Chamber of Commerce Institute for Organizational Management; Auburn University’s Economic Development Certification program; and Georgia Institute of Technology’s Economic Development Certification. She has also been a member of the Economic Development Association of Alabama and the Georgia Economic Developers Association.

Smith has also held a senior level position with RMA Associates in Washington, DC. The company is a CPA and consulting firm which provides federal government-focused audit, consulting, and advisory services. Prior to living in the DC area, Smith served as president and chief executive officer of the Perry Area Chamber of Commerce in Perry, Georgia for ten years. She worked closely with the local economic development authority, local and state governments, and business community to create a pro-business environment for entrepreneurialism and existing industries.

About the Economic Development Corporation

In May 2018, the Economic Council of Okeechobee's Board of Directors recognized the need for growth and located a study previously performed for Okeechobee in 2005 by the POLICOM Corporation, a firm in Martin County specializing in the analysis of local economies to determine whether they are growing or declining. The Economic Council took necessary action to update the 2005 study by presenting to the Board of County Commissioners requesting support for the update. The commission unanimously voted to seek professional counsel from Bill Fruth with the POLICOM Corp. Fruth's first recommendation was for the community to create and generously fund a professionally-managed economic development organization, as was also his recommendation in the 2005 study.

The Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation was formed to serve as an independent, sovereign organization governed by investors from the private sector and appointments from participating public and private agencies. The current board of directors includes various industry leaders, including Todd Clemons, Okeechobee Livestock Market; Jon Geitner, Seacoast Bank; Christa Luna, Gilbert Family of Companies; Wes Williamson, Williamson Cattle Company; Keith Walpole, Walpole, Inc.; John Williams, CenterState Bank; and Mack Worley, G.M. Worley, Inc.

Appointments from the Economic Council (Ashley Tripp, Tripp Electric Motors, Inc.; Fred Fanizzi, Quail Creek Plantation; and Frank Irby, retired, Raulerson Hospital), Okeechobee County Commission (Terry Burroughs, County Commissioner District 4); City of Okeechobee (Marcos Montes De Oca, City Administrator); School District (Ken Kenworthy, Superintendent of Schools); Chamber of Commerce (Tabitha Trent, Chamber Chair and CenterState Bank); and Indian River State College (Dr. Ed Massey, Dr. Pam Welmon and Russ Brown) also serve on the board of directors.

The talent search for Smith was conducted by The Chason Group, an executive search firm specializing in tourism, economic development, chambers of commerce, foundations and other non-profit organizations.