



Ralph Staffins III Chosen to Lead Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce

(Brunswick, Georgia) After a nationwide executive search, the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has chosen Ralph Staffins III to lead the business organization as president and chief executive officer.

Current chamber leader Milton H. "Woody" Woodside announced his plan to retire during a board planning session in 2018. Having served in the important role since 1985, he is recognized as one of the strongest advocates for business in the southeast and currently one of the longest continuous serving chamber executives in the state.

Staffins is serving as president and chief executive officer of the Covington-Newton County Chamber of Commerce in Covington, Georgia located about 30 miles east of Atlanta. He has led the chamber of commerce, economic development office, main street program and tourism for the community since 2015. In 2018, under Staffins' guidance, the chamber was awarded the 4-Star Certification by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, one of the highest designations afforded to chambers of commerce. Only the top three percent of chambers in the country have such a designation.

"We are excited to welcome Ralph to Brunswick and the Golden Isles," said Jeff Bennett of Collins & Associates, Real Estate Appraisers and the 2018-2019 chamber board chair. "Ralph has the experience as a chamber professional to continue to build on the great work our chamber has been able to accomplish for the past thirty plus years. He will build on that by bringing a new perspective to our chamber and business community."

Prior to serving in Covington, Staffins was executive director of Forward McDuffie in Thomson, Georgia and economic development director for Wilkinson County, Georgia. He graduated from Georgia College & State



Ralph Staffins III

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University in Milledgeville, Georgia with a Bachelor of Science in political science and Master of Public Administration in 2006 and 2008 respectively.

“To have the opportunity to lead the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber and grow in my profession is exciting,” says Staffins. “Following in the footsteps of a chamber icon like Woody Woodside is going to be challenging. I look forward to becoming a part of the team that continues building a strong business community.”

Staffins currently serves as vice chair of the Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, an organization he will chair in 2020-2021. He is also a Certified Economic Development Professional as designated by the International Economic Development Council, Georgia Certified Chamber Executive, graduate of Leadership Georgia, graduate of Georgia Academy of Economic Development, and board member of the Newton County Industrial Development Authority.

In addition to Bennett, other members of the search committee included Greer Anderson, United Community Bank and 2019-2020 chamber chair; Jeff Barker, Saint Mary’s United Methodist Church Foundation; Tres Hamilton, Coastal Georgia Area Action Authority; Jones Hooks, Jekyll Island Authority; Christy Jordan, Southeast Georgia Health Systems; Randal Morris, Georgia Pacific; Missy Neu, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Hodnett Cooper Real Estate; Donna Poe, Ameris Bank; Scott Steilen, Sea Island Company; and Sean Stewart, Turner & Associate Insurance.

The first day at the chamber for Staffins will be June 1. He and his wife Rachel have three children, ages 7, 5 and 1. The family will be relocating to Glynn County this summer.

About the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce. The organization was established in 1954 and serves as the voice of business for Glynn County, Georgia. With over 1,200 members, the business organization plays a significant role in shaping the community’s economy through advocacy on the local, regional, state and federal levels.

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