



**Nov. 29,  
2023  
at Hyatt  
Regency**

# THE REGIONAL SUMMIT

**COLLABORATING FOR A MORE COMPETITIVE REGION**

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**PRESENTED BY:**





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## ABOUT THE SUMMIT

**Presented by Community Trust Bank**, the 2023 Regional Summit will provide the opportunity for influential business, community, and local government leaders within our nine-county economic development region to come together and learn how we can make Central Kentucky more economically competitive for jobs and talent. In a post pandemic world where businesses and people can live and work from almost anywhere, building a stronger region has never been more important.

Within the recently developed **Regional Competitiveness Plan** are three specific goals to help increase economic competitiveness for jobs within the Greater Lexington Region, including:

- **Increase the regional job, wage, & GDP growth rates to the national average.**
- **Increase the regional labor force including the attraction and retention of young professionals.**
- **Attract state and federal funding and advocate for policy improvements to support the plan.**

Creating change in these areas would not only positively impact business and industry in terms of increased workforce and growth opportunities, but also local governments, schools, and residents through additional resources, services, housing, and greater quality of life amenities within the region.

During this full-day event, participants will hear an annual economic update for the region, how our region is comparing to other competitor metros, and trends for workforce and economic development. Leaders will also be engaged in sessions focused on the key action items to building a more competitive region.

### Why Regional Collaboration?

- Marketing a larger geographic area makes us more competitive with comparable cities for labor force, business sites, housing inventory, and education resources.
- Regionalism allows us to pool resources for common goals, including increased talent attraction marketing, advocacy efforts, and development projects.
- Regional marketing to talent creates the first-ever digital entry point to showcase the unique culture as a whole.
- Leaning into the largest MSA builds brand equity with the external audience and gives new audiences a geographic reference for the region.
- Collaborative efforts help create a common language and overarching marketing strategy for attracting people and jobs.
- Developing a strategic synergy allows for coordinated advocacy efforts that benefit the region as a whole.

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# AGENDA

## Regional Summit 2023 Wednesday, November 29 Hyatt Regency Lexington

**7:30-8:30 a.m. REGISTRATION / CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST / NETWORKING**

**8:30 a.m.**

**WELCOME & PRESENTING SPONSOR REMARKS**

**LOCATION: Thoroughbred Ballroom**

**Regional Summit presented by Community Trust Bank**



**Speakers:** **Cassidy Rosenthal**, Commerce Lexington 2023 Board Chair, Lexington Office Executive Member, Stites & Harbison, PLLC; **Bob Quick**, President & CEO, Commerce Lexington; and **Billie Dollins**, Central Region President, Community Trust Bank

**8:45 a.m.**

**REGIONAL OFFICIAL WELCOME**

**Speakers:** Lexington Mayor **Linda Gorton**; Madison Co. Judge-Executive **Reagan Taylor**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Economic Competitiveness: Annual Benchmarking Update**

**Morning Keynote Sponsored by Republic Bank & Trust Co.**



**Speaker: Ted Abernathy**, Managing Partner, Economic Leadership LLC

*Ted Abernathy returns for the annual regional competitiveness report, sharing current economic trends, updated analysis on how the Greater Lexington region compares with other cities/regions and thought leadership around opportunities for the future and regional competitiveness plan action items.*

Ask Questions:

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Use Participant

Code: **region**

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10:00 a.m.

## One Columbus: A Regional Collaboration Profile Sponsored by AT&T Kentucky



Ask Questions:  
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Use Participant  
Code: **region**

**Speaker: Kenny McDonald**, President & CEO, Columbus Partnership  
*Kenny McDonald shares how One Columbus elevated its regional collaboration to benefit each community in the 11-county region. This region in Ohio isn't just home to 2.2 million people—it's also home to some of the world's most recognizable brands, innovative small businesses, powerhouse research hubs, and top-notch academic institutions.*

10:50 a.m.

**BREAK**

11:00 a.m.

**BREAKOUT SESSIONS (Repeated in the afternoon):**

## Learn About the Region's Business Attraction Strategic Targets LOCATION: Regency 1

**Speaker: Ted Abernathy**, Managing Partner, Economic Leadership LLC; and **Gina Greathouse**, Executive VP of Economic Development, Commerce Lexington.

*Increasing engagement with site selectors and key industries is a priority for economic development. Join Ted Abernathy with Economic Leadership and the Bluegrass Alliance economic development professionals for an overview of the targeted industry analysis for the 9-county region and a discussion of the region's competitive advantage in attracting more jobs.*



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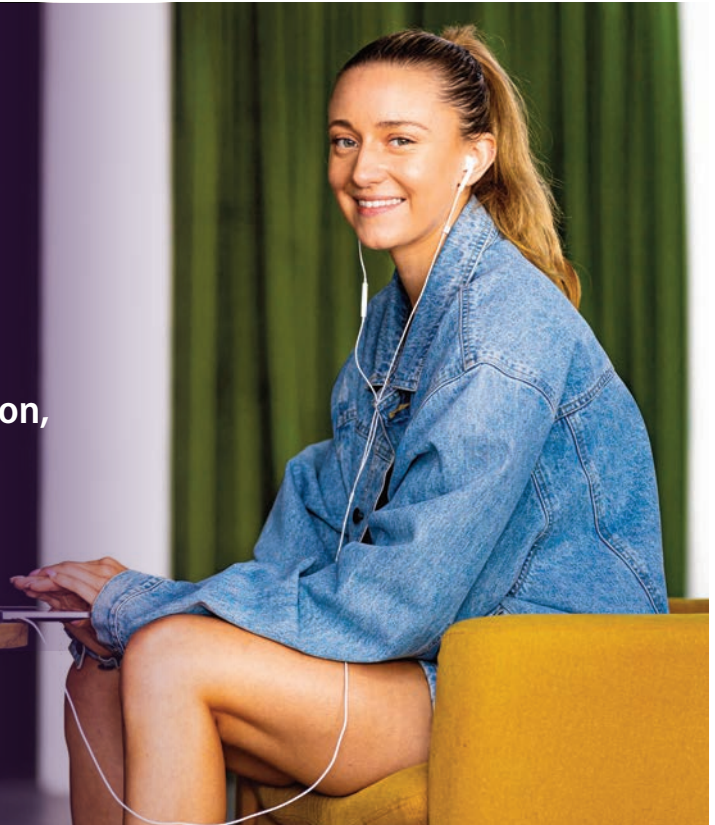
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# AGENDA



## Engage in Regional Talent Attraction Marketing Workshop

**LOCATION:** Hyatt Suites (2nd Level)

### **Session Sponsored by VisitLEX**

**Speakers:** **Betsy Dexter**, Executive Director, Commerce Lexington's Business and Education Network; **Mary Quinn Ramer**, President, VisitLEX; **Emily Downey**, President & CEO, Woodford Co. Chamber of Commerce; **Lori Cooper Saunders**, Executive Director, Georgetown/Scott Co. Tourism Commission; and **Nancy Turner**, Executive Director, Winchester/Clark Co. Tourism Commission. **Facilitator:** **Susan Rogers**, Partner, People Pinnacle.

*Elevating the region's storytelling about quality-of-life is a priority for talent attraction. Join this interactive session to learn more about key quality of life marketing leverages and provide feedback on the stories for sharing with external audiences about each community in the region.*

## Learn About Advocacy Priorities for the Legislative Session

**LOCATION:** Regency 3

### **Session Sponsored by Cornerstone Government Affairs**

**Speakers:** **Kentucky Senator Amanda Mays Bledsoe**; **J.D. Chaney**, Executive Director/CEO, Kentucky League of Cities; **Tatum Dale**, District Director, Congressman Andy Barr; **Kim Menke**, Regional Director - Government Affairs, Toyota Motor North America; and **Justin Landon**, CEO, Bluegrass REALTORS. **Moderator:** **Andi Johnson**, Commerce Lexington Chief Policy Officer & Director of Regional Engagement.

*Advocating for increased state funding to support product development, infrastructure and economic development marketing are top legislative priorities. Learn about these proposals and how you can help advocate for them with legislators during the 2024 Legislative Session.*



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12:00 p.m.

BREAK

12:15 p.m.

**LUNCHEON: Business Attraction/Mega Site Profile**

**LOCATION: Thoroughbred Ballroom**

**Sponsored by South Central Bank**

**Speakers:** Rick Games, Elizabethtown-Hardin County Industrial Foundation; **Kristina Slattery**, Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development; and **Sarah Vaughn**, Community Engagement Coordinator, BlueOval SK. **Moderator: Terri Bradshaw**, President & CEO, Kentucky Capital Development Corporation.

*Leadership involved with the BlueOval SK project in Glendale, KY discuss the challenges and opportunities to landing a major project on an existing mega-site and impacts to this region. As regional leaders in the Bluegrass Region work to create more shovel ready land in the region, including mega-site opportunities, this is a timely discussion success when opportunity meets preparation.*



Ask Questions:  
Go to  
[www.slido.com](http://www.slido.com)  
Use Participant  
Code: **region**

1:20 p.m.

**AFTERNOON OVERVIEW**

**Sponsor Remarks by Kentucky Utilities**



1:30 p.m.

BREAK



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1:45 p.m.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS (Repeated from morning):

### Learn About the Region's Business Attraction Strategic Targets

**LOCATION:** Regency 1



#### **Session Sponsored by Bluegrass REALTORS**

**Speaker:** **Ted Abernathy**, Managing Partner, Economic Leadership LLC; and **Gina Greathouse**, Executive VP of Economic Development, Commerce Lexington.

*Increasing engagement with site selectors and key industries is a priority for economic development. Join Ted Abernathy with Economic Leadership and the Bluegrass Alliance economic development professionals for an overview of the targeted industry analysis for the 9-county region and a discussion of the region's competitive advantage in attracting more jobs.*

### Engage in Regional Talent Attraction Marketing Workshop

**LOCATION:** Hyatt Suites (2nd Level)



#### **Session Sponsored by Hanna Resource Group**

**Speakers:** **Betsy Dexter**, Executive Director, Commerce Lexington's Business and Education Network; **Mary Quinn Ramer**, President, VisitLEX; **Emily Downey**, President & CEO, Woodford Co. Chamber of Commerce; **Lori Cooper Saunders**, Executive Director, Georgetown/Scott Co. Tourism Commission; and **Nancy Turner**, Executive Director, Winchester/Clark Co. Tourism Commission. **Facilitator:** **Susan Rogers**, Partner, People Pinnacle.

*Elevating the region's storytelling about quality-of-life is a priority for talent attraction. Join this interactive session to learn more about key quality of life marketing leverages and provide feedback on the stories for sharing with external audiences about each community in the region.*

### Learn About Advocacy Priorities for the Legislative Session

**LOCATION:** Regency 3

**Speakers:** **Charles Aull**, Executive Director, Kentucky Chamber Center for Policy & Research; **J.D. Chaney**, Executive Director/CEO, Kentucky League of Cities; **Tatum Dale**, District Director, Congressman Andy Barr; **Kim Menke**, Regional Director - Government Affairs, Toyota Motor North America; and **Justin Landon**, CEO, Bluegrass REALTORS. **Moderator:** **Andi Johnson**, Commerce Lexington Chief Policy Officer.

*Advocating for increased state funding to support product development, infrastructure and economic development marketing are top legislative priorities. Learn about these proposals and how you can help advocate for them with legislators during the 2024 Legislative Session.*

2:45 p.m.

## BREAK

3:00 p.m.

### IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE: Measuring Success & The Year Ahead

**LOCATION:** Thoroughbred Ballroom

#### **Sponsored by Asbury University**



**Speaker:** **Steve Byars**, Commerce Lexington 2024 Board Chair, Vice President & Chief Investment Officer, Moneywatch Advisors, Inc.

*Business leadership provides a recap of the Summit and an overview of the deliverables for the year ahead, including a talent recruitment messaging preview video.*

3:20 p.m.

## CLOSING REMARKS

3:30 p.m.

## SUMMIT CONCLUDES





## **Ted Abernathy | Managing Partner Economic Leadership LLC**

Ted Abernathy serves as the Managing Partner of Economic Leadership, LLC. Economic Leadership, based in Shallotte, NC, is a small group of data, strategy, and policy experts working with private and public clients to analyze competitiveness, develop strategy, support leadership, and reimagine the future. Over the past nine years, the team has worked on 146 projects in more than twenty states and internationally. Ted is the principal author of close to 100 reports on future trends, economic and workforce development, technology, and leadership, and he speaks on the economy almost every week. He currently serves as an economic advisor to the Council of State Chambers and previously held a similar position to the Southern Governor's Association. In his 42-year career, Ted has led city, county, and regional economic development organizations and an economic policy think tank. Born in Dallas, North Carolina, Ted received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and his master's from Johns Hopkins University, is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute and is an Eisenhower Fellow for global economics. He and his wife live in a small town on the North Carolina coast.

## **Charles Aull | Executive Director Kentucky Chamber Center for Policy & Research**

Charles Aull is the Executive Director of the Kentucky Chamber Center for Policy and Research, where he leads the organization's public policy and economic research initiatives. Charles holds a PhD from Indiana University and has studied at Georgetown University and the Villanova University School of Law. He has published articles, white papers, and reports on economic and public policy issues and has testified before legislative bodies on topics such as tax reform, workforce development, and education.

## **Senator Amanda Mays Bledsoe | Kentucky 12th District**

Amanda Mays Bledsoe, R-Lexington, represents the 12th Senate District, including Boyle, Mercer, and Woodford Counties, and part of Fayette County. She serves as Senate Appropriations and Revenue vice chair and Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee co-chair. Bledsoe is a member of the Senate Families and Children, Licensing and Occupations, and State and Local Government Committees. Additionally, she serves as a member of each budget review subcommittee, which includes: Economic Development and Tourism, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection; Education; General Government; Finance and Public Protection; Human Resources; and Justice and Judiciary. During the 2023 Interim she was named as a member on the Health & Human Services Delivery System Task Force. Bledsoe served as a Lexington City Council member for District 10 for eight years before being elected to the state Senate. She holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy and classical studies from Hillsdale College, and is a graduate of the University of Kentucky where she earned a master of arts degree from the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce.

## **Terri Bradshaw | President & CEO KY Capital Development Corporation**

Terri Bradshaw is President/CEO of the KY Capital Development Corporation and has been active in economic development throughout Kentucky for more than 30 years. In her tenure at KCDC she founded EmpowHER Frankfort, which brings women together to support, encourage and empower them to grow personally and professionally, as well as harness their knowledge and skills to benefit the community. She also implemented Think Frankfort First, a workforce and economic development initiative that provides information about the benefits of local businesses to the community; an onboarding ambassador program; a clearinghouse of apprenticeship and employment opportunities; and a housing development strategy, all to help in recruiting and retaining a local workforce.

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# SPEAKERS

## **Steve Byars | Vice President & Chief Investment Officer Moneywatch Advisors, Inc.**

With 25 years' experience as a Moneywatch client, Steve joined the firm at the beginning of 2017. Prior to joining the team, Steve was the Assistant Vice President for Government Relations at the University of Kentucky for almost 13 years and has developed a passion for helping people achieve their own financial independence. Steve is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. He serves on the boards of directors of the YMCA of Central Kentucky, the God's Pantry Food Bank and Commerce Lexington.

## **J.D. Chaney | Executive Director / CEO Kentucky League of Cities**

J.D. Chaney is the Executive Director/CEO of the Kentucky League of Cities. J.D. began his career with KLC as a law clerk before serving as KLC's Counsel for Member Legal Services and later as Director of Governmental Affairs, Chief Governmental Affairs Officer, and Deputy Executive Director. During his career, J.D. has authored numerous articles and publications on municipal law and participated in several legal cases impacting cities in Kentucky. J.D. is a member of the International Municipal Lawyers Association, the Madison County Bar Association, the Municipal Attorneys Association of Kentucky, and is a past chairman of the Kentucky Bar Association's Local Government Law Section. He also serves on the Kentucky Local Insurance Premium Tax Advisory Council, Commerce Lexington's Public Policy Council, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's Competitiveness Council, the National League of Cities Mutual Insurance Company Board of Directors, and the University of Kentucky's Martin School Board of Visitors. J.D. holds a law degree from the University of

Kentucky College of Law, a Master of Business Administration degree from Eastern Kentucky University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Economics from the University of Montana.

## **Tatum Dale | District Director Congressman Andy Barr**

Tatum Dale serves as District Director for Sixth District Congressman Andy Barr. As the Congressman's top aide in Kentucky, she oversees the district office team and operations in Lexington. As part of the Congressman's ongoing accessibility initiative, Tatum regularly meets with constituents, elected officials, agencies, and community groups to identify their needs and concerns, in turn sharing those with the Congressman. She also works to connect those groups with federal agencies and resources as needed.

## **Betsy Dexter | Executive Director The Business and Education Network**

Betsy Dexter joined Commerce Lexington in August 2015 as the Executive Director of The Business & Education Network (BEN). BEN's mission is to create, attract and sustain a globally skilled workforce to meet the needs of the region's existing and target industries. Before coming to Commerce Lexington, Betsy spent three years with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce as a Manager of Public Affairs specializing in Education and Workforce Policy. Prior to her work with the Chamber she was a Field Representative for former Congressman Ben Chandler where she represented the Congressman throughout the 6th district of Kentucky. In April 2015, she completed a yearlong fellowship with the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives where she worked to develop strategies for improving talent pipelines in Kentucky. She is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and currently resides in Lexington.

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## Emily Downey | President & CEO

### Woodford County Chamber of Commerce

Emily Downey is an experienced marketing and business development professional who has spent her career on global partnership, activation, marketing and business development strategies along with working in mergers and acquisitions for due diligence, culture integration and strategic vision planning. Downey has worked with the global agri-business firm Alltech and is now the President and CEO of EKD Strategies, a marketing and business development firm while serving as the Woodford County Tourism Executive Director and President and CEO of the Woodford County Chamber of Commerce. Emily is also the co-host of What's Up Woodford. Downey proudly serves on the Woodford County Chamber of Commerce Board, Bluegrass Community Hospital Board, LexArts board, advisory council for Girls on the Run, and chaired the Commerce Lexington EMERGE Conference in 2020.

## Richard A. "Rick" Games | President & COO

### Elizabethtown/Hardin County Industrial Foundation

Rick has been employed by the EHCIF since 2001. He is responsible for daily operations, marketing, and project management for economic development in the Greater Elizabethtown area. During his 20-plus year career in economic development, his team has recruited numerous new industries and created over 5,000 jobs. More recently, the EHCIF has landed several noteworthy projects to include Kruger Box, Lotte Aluminum, Advanced Nano Products, and BlueOval SK Battery. He previously served the City of Elizabethtown for 29 years in the Fire Department, including as Fire Chief from January 1990 until retirement in 2001. He is a member of the Kentucky Firefighters Hall of Fame, the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce, and the Kentucky Association for Economic Development, where he served on the board. Rick is also a graduate of Leadership Elizabethtown.

## Mayor Linda Gorton | City of Lexington

Linda Gorton, the longest continuously serving member of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council, is serving her second term as Lexington Mayor. Mayor Gorton was re-elected on Nov. 8, 2022, winning 71% of the vote. Mayor Gorton has lived in Lexington most of her adult life. In addition to her public service, Mayor Gorton has been a dedicated volunteer in our community. In her first term, Mayor Gorton, a registered nurse, successfully led our city through the pandemic, protecting our health and safety during a challenge that may rank as the most daunting of the modern era. During the pandemic, Mayor Gorton kept our economy on track, despite a slowdown of nearly all economic activity. Now, employment has surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Goals for her second term include a continuing focus on public safety, lifting up and protecting our young people, expanding the emphasis to disrupt domestic violence and creating paths forward to improve mental health; providing more affordable housing; expanding our ag-tech sector as part of our work to attract new employers and grow jobs locally; and continuing to protect our working farms. She is a registered nurse and graduate of the University of Kentucky.

## Gina Greathouse | Executive VP, Economic Development Commerce Lexington Inc.

Gina is a native of Franklin County and has been working in the field of economic development for over 30 years, as well as in that role here in Lexington/Central Kentucky since 1995. She is currently the Executive Vice President for Economic Development for Commerce Lexington. Prior to her current appointment, she was employed by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development from 1990 to 1995. She has traveled throughout the state, country and internationally working to recruit companies to Kentucky and the Bluegrass Region. Gina graduated from the University of Kentucky's College of Business and

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Economics with high departmental honors in 1988. She has served the community in several capacities throughout her career. Most notably, she is co-chair for Central Kentucky's Bluegrass Alliance. She currently sits on the boards of LexArts, the Business and Education Network and the World Trade Center of Kentucky. She is a member of the Kentucky Association for Economic Development; the Japan America Society of Kentucky; and the International Economic Development Council.

### **Andi Johnson | Chief Policy Officer Commerce Lexington Inc.**

Andi Johnson serves as the Chief Policy Officer and Director of Regional Engagement for Commerce Lexington Inc. Prior to this role, she worked for the Republican Party of Kentucky as the Communications and Political Director. She has also worked for U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell, the Office of the Kentucky Lt. Governor, and the Governor's Office of Local Development. Andi received a bachelor's degree in political science from Georgetown College and a master's degree in diplomacy, communications from the University of Kentucky Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce. She currently serves as a member of the YMCA High Street Board of Directors. She previously served on the boards of Opportunity Work and Learning and Mission Lexington. Andi is also a graduate of Leadership Lexington and was named to the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives' 2020 list of the Top 40 Chamber Executives Under 40.

### **Justin Landon | CEO Bluegrass REALTORS®**

Bluegrass REALTORS® welcomed Justin Landon as CEO in April 2018. Prior to joining Bluegrass REALTORS®, Landon served as the Vice President of Government Affairs for the San Antonio Board of REALTORS®. Before becoming a part of the REALTOR® family, Landon spent over ten years working in the United States Congress. He is a graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara and grew up in a multi-generational REALTOR® family.

### **Kenny McDonald | President & CEO Columbus Partnership**

Kenny McDonald serves as the third president and CEO of the Columbus Partnership, a civic organization of Columbus' top business leaders. The Partnership was founded in 2002 to strengthen the economic and cultural base of Central Ohio. He brings more than 25 years of experience working with metropolitan economies in Savannah, Georgia; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Charlotte, North Carolina. He also spent seven years as a global site location advisor for Fluor Corporation. McDonald has been named one of the Top 50 economic developers by *Economix* and is a frequent speaker and national thought leader on regional economic development. He was also named Small Nonprofit CEO of the Year by *Columbus CEO* magazine. McDonald was instrumental in creating and leading the Columbus Region's growth strategy when he was selected to lead Columbus 2020, a regional economic development group that was launched in 2010. Now known as One Columbus and housed within the Columbus Partnership, the organization is consistently ranked as one of the top 10 economic development organizations in the United States and represents a public-private partnership of more than 300 investors and partners from an 11-county area. McDonald has served as chairman of the International Economic Development Council and is an active board member of the Champions of the Community/NCH Invitational, Columbus Regional Airport Authority, Experience Columbus, Ohio Business Roundtable, Ohio Excels, Timashev Center for Software Innovation Advisory Council, the Transportation Research Center, RTRX, Ohio State University's SciTech, and United Way. McDonald is a graduate of Dickinson State University, Georgia Southern University, the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma, and Harvard's Young American Leaders program. He has been a Certified Economic Developer (CecD) for over 20 years.

### **Kim Menke | Regional Director – Government Affairs Toyota Motor North America, Inc.**

Kim Menke is the Regional Director of the Government Affairs stationed at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. (TMMK) in Georgetown, Kentucky. He joined Toyota in 1987, as an Environmental Engineer to support the construction and startup Toyota's first wholly owned manufacturing operation in the United States. From Toyota's largest and most complete manufacturing operation, he manages and supports the company relationships with local, state and federal officials where we have manufacturing operations in Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee and West Virginia. Areas of specific focus include the workforce development programs, economic development efforts, logistics, public policy and legislative efforts. Prior to joining Toyota, Mr. Menke held Plant Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering positions with General Motors in Kentucky & Indiana. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Engineering Technology from Western Kentucky University. In the community, he has also served as the Chair of Local and Regional Chambers of Commerce, Public Policy Organizations, business and numerous non-profit boards across Kentucky. His current efforts focus on workforce/economic development initiatives including founding Chairman of KY FAME (Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education), founding Chairman of the Kentucky Workforce Center Board and current Board Member, and current Chairman of the Kentucky Workforce and Innovation Board (KWIB).

### **Mary Quinn Ramer | President VisitLEX**

Mary Quinn K. Ramer is President of VisitLEX, where she leads all marketing, convention and administrative activities for the destination organization. She brings 25 years of tourism, marketing communications, and event planning experience to VisitLEX. Prior to becoming President, Mary Quinn spent seven years as the Vice President of Marketing at the organization. In addition, she is involved in numerous tourism-related organizations, including membership on the Kentucky Horse Park Commission and the boards of the Kentucky Travel Industry Association, Rural Land Management Board, Sister Cities, Equestrian Events International and McDowell House Museum. Mary Quinn is a proud recipient of the Public Relations Society of America's top honor, the Silver Anvil, as well as the numerous marketing awards from the Kentucky Travel Industry Association. In 2021, she was named the Association's Member of the Year. In 2023, she received the prestigious Mangeot-Oaken Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor bestowed on an individual in Kentucky's tourism industry. Mary Quinn was named the 2022 Tourism Director of the Year by the Kentucky Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau.

### **Susan Rogers | Partner People Pinnacle, LLC**

Susan Rogers has over 25 years of experience as a management consultant, organizational change expert and HR professional. She specializes in facilitating strategy and organizational design, developing and coaching leaders, and managing the "people" side of organizational change initiatives. Susan spent the early part of her career as a classically trained management consultant at Deloitte Consulting and Arthur Andersen Business Consulting where she helped her clients improve processes, skills and organizational effectiveness. For nearly a decade, Susan worked internally for Lexmark International. Her consulting work spans the business, government and non-profit sectors with clients - some of which include The Coca-Cola Company, Marriott International, EOP Architects, Traditional Bank, NASA, the YMCA of Central Kentucky, and the Community Action Council. A business graduate of Miami University in Ohio, Susan is a Bregman Partners Executive Coach, a Predictive Index Certified Partner and her certifications include: Prosci Change Management Practitioner, Development Dimensions International's Targeted Selection, Maximizing Performance and Facilitation, and Employment Learning Innovations.



## **Cassidy Rosenthal | Lexington Office Executive Member Stites & Harbison, PLLC**

Cassidy R. Rosenthal is the Lexington Office Executive Member and a Member of the Construction Service Group. Her practice focuses on advising clients throughout all phases of construction projects including planning, contract drafting and negotiation, and project administration. Cassidy consults with clients, advises clients on the appropriate project delivery methods and drafts related agreements including design-build, design-bid-build, and construction management. Cassidy is a leader in the community, serving as Chair of the Commerce Lexington Board, the Associated General Contractors of Kentucky Board, and as Past-Chair for the American Bar Association Forum on the Construction Industry Division 1 Dispute Avoidance & Resolution Steering Committee.

## **Lori Cooper Saunders | Executive Director Georgetown/Scott County Tourism Commission**

Lori Cooper Saunders is a seasoned event planning, marketing, and community engagement professional. Currently serving as the Executive Director of the Georgetown/Scott County Tourism Commission, she plays a pivotal role in elevating the appeal of the Georgetown/Scott County community for both residents and visitors. With over a decade of expertise, Lori's leadership has been evident in her successful management of marketing and advertising campaigns for tourism. She also orchestrates prominent events for Celebrate Georgetown, the Festival of the Horse, and the Farm to Fork dinner series, rebranded as Seed to Feed. She holds key positions in several tourism-related organizations, including the Lexington Bluegrass Region, the Kentucky Travel Industry Association, and the Kentucky Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus. Lori also serves as Kentucky's Advocacy Chair for the Southeast Tourism Society. She has been honored with numerous awards and recognitions, including the Georgetown Woman's Club Woman of the Year, an accolade that speaks to her outstanding commitment to the community. She was also awarded a key to the City of Georgetown, as well as the prestigious Kentucky Travel Association Member of the Year award, and was also celebrated as Citizen of the Year.

## **Kristina Slattery | Commissioner of Business & Community Development Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development**

As commissioner for business and community development, Kristina Slattery is primarily responsible for new business recruitment and support of existing Kentucky industry expansions, including strategy and operations implementation at the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development. In that role, she leads a team of project managers to support Team Kentucky's mission of job growth and investment across the Commonwealth. Slattery previously served as deputy commissioner, and executive director of workforce, community development and research at the Cabinet. She initially joined the Cabinet as a workforce project manager in 2015 and quickly took on the additional role of business development project manager. Slattery, a native of Frankfort, joined the Cabinet following 10 years in human resources with Home Depot stores in Lexington and Louisville.

## **Judge Executive Reagan Taylor | Madison County**

Reagan Taylor has served as Judge Executive of Madison County since 2015. A lifelong Madison Countian, Judge Taylor started his career as an entrepreneur with his own construction and real estate company prior to shifting to a career in public service. In 2022, he won his third bid for Judge with a continuous commitment to build a better Madison County. During his time in office, Reagan has been instrumental in shepherding various projects to completion including road and bridge projects like the Exit 95 corridor exchange, modernizing the interaction between County government and citizens through technology, addressing community drug addiction, and attracting and recruiting top companies to Madison County. In 2017, Reagan was nominated by his peers to serve on the Kentucky Association of Counties (KACo) Board of Directors which culminated to being nominated as the 2020 President of KACo.

## **Nancy Turner | Executive Director Winchester-Clark County Tourism Commission**

Nancy Allen Turner is the executive director of the Winchester-Clark County Tourism Commission. Prior to working for the Tourism Commission, Turner served as curator at White Hall Historic Site, Director of Operations for the UK Basketball Museum, and Director of the Bluegrass Heritage Museum. Turner serves on the Kentucky Travel Industry Legislative Committee and is the Legislative Chair for Kentucky's Bluegrass Tourism and sits on the Practitioner Advisory Council for Eastern Kentucky University Parks and Recreation Department, Tourism, Historic Preservation, Recreation. She is the past chair of Preservation Kentucky, The Kentucky Association of Convention and Visitor's Bureaus and Kentucky's Bluegrass Tourism Region.

## **Sarah Vaughn | External Affairs BlueOval SK**

Hardin County native Sarah Vaughn recently joined the external affairs team at BlueOval SK as Kentucky's community engagement coordinator. She will serve as a liaison between BlueOval SK Battery Park in Glendale, Kentucky, and community organizations. Vaughn was born in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, and is a proud Central Hardin High School graduate. She most recently served as the city events program manager for the City of Elizabethtown and held positions previously with the Advocacy & Support Center, WQXE radio, and Wind Energy Corporation in Elizabethtown. Vaughn holds a Bachelor of Arts in communication from Lindsey Wilson College and Master of Arts in communication from Bellarmine University.

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# REGIONAL PLAN

## PROCESS

The collaborative process for a strategic plan began in 2021 with the hire of Ted Abernathy with Economic Leadership. Ted was tasked with evaluating global and national economic trends and to assessing the regional economy. Later, Development Counsellors International (DCI) was hired, adding global expertise in economic development, talent attraction, and tourism marketing to the project.

Since its conception, the process of creating a regional competitiveness plan has been rooted in research, with over 1,700 surveys, numerous focus groups/workshops, and countless stakeholder committee meetings. The survey results, national trends data, and industry experts suggest that... **We are better together!**

## GOALS

### #1

Increase the regional job, wage, & GDP growth rates to the national average.

### #2

Increase the regional labor force including the attraction and retention of young professionals.

### #3

Attract state and federal funding and advocate for policy improvements to support the plan.

## ACTION ITEMS

- #1** Increase investment in regional branding and site selector awareness of key sectors with focus on quality of life and new land availability.
- #2** Support multi-jurisdictional product development strategy to secure more shovel ready land and buildings, including a regional business park.
- #3** Educate key leaders in the region about economic development needs and competitive realities.
- #4** Develop a regional talent recruitment/attraction marketing campaign with messages aligned with the economic development branding effort.
- #5** Develop a strategy to connect businesses with students in the region to increase the stickiness of young adults.
- #6** Coordinate advocacy for federal and state infrastructure, product development, talent marketing funding.
- #7** Advocate for improved policies related to key competitiveness issues such as improves tax/regulatory policies and housing affordability.





## EXECUTION TACTICS

2023-24

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Update regional job attraction website.
- Elevate engagement with top site selectors.
- Hold economic development briefings with key regional leaders.
- Create key sector marketing and engagement strategies.

### WORKFORCE / TALENT:

- Create regional talent attraction website.
- Create new talent marketing social media content.
- Host internal stakeholder workshops and talent campaign launch.
- Develop a strategy to connect businesses with students to enhance retention.

### PUBLIC POLICY:

- Advocate for government funding and support for infrastructure and marketing.
- Advocate for improved policies to support better business climate and housing affordability.

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