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NEWS RELEASE



SWLA Economic Development Alliance Announces Staff Changes

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA -- The Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance has announced staff promotions effective January 1, 2017.

George Swift, President/CEO of the Alliance said each of the employees has shown professional growth over an extended period of time and their developing skills will benefit the Alliance.

“As we embark on a new year, the Alliance staff is adept at understanding and managing the challenges of the economic development community. We are strong as a group and will continue to work for the diversification of our five parish economy. I am proud of the staff,” he said.

Promoted were:



Liz Deville, Executive Vice President, Director of Administration:

DeVile was hired as Administrative Assistant for the SWLA Partnership for Economic Development in 2004. In 2006, she joined the Chamber SWLA and Chamber Foundation SWLA as administrator and participated in efforts to combine the Chamber, Foundation and Partnership under the Alliance umbrella. DeVile served on committees that led to the creation of the SEED Center. DeVile has served as Vice President of Finance and Administration and worked closely with Swift and other staff members to obtain and retain Five-Star accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other recognition from other Chamber and economic development organizations. DeVile is a 2015 graduate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce/IOM-Northeast Institute at Villanova University. In 2016, she served as class advisor for the

Southeast Institute at the University of Georgia in Athens and has been selected to the 2017 Southeast Institute Board of Regents for a two-year term.



R.B. Smith, Vice President, Business and Workforce Development:

a resident of Lake Charles since 1976, R. B.'s career has included working in retail, wholesale, service, and educational industries. He retired in 2011 after 30 years of service working at Sowela Technical Community College in technical education and workforce development. Smith's focuses include recruiting and retaining businesses, and facilitating better communication between the business and education communities of southwest Louisiana to identify needs and resources for building a 21st century world class workforce in our region. He holds degrees from McNeese State University and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Active in religious, professional, civic, and fraternal organizations, in his spare time, he enjoys traveling with his wife, Stephanie and children, Robert and Emily.



Eric Cormier, Vice President, Policy/Strategic Development:

Cormier joined the Alliance staff in 2013 as Special Projects/Assistant Communications Manager. In his new duties, Cormier will oversee strategic communication projects, assist in developing policy for the Alliance along with spearheading various economic and generational initiatives to help foster regionalization. He is a 1991 graduate of McNeese State University with a B.S. in Mass Communications and is completing certification as a Louisiana Economic Developer. Cormier's professional background includes a 16 year stint at as a reporter/columnist at the American Press newspaper along with more than 20 years of public relations, governmental affairs, and crisis communications experience.



Brittany Duplechian, Director of Alliance Foundation and Chamber SWLA Leadership:

Duplechian joined the SWLA Economic Development Alliance team in 2011 as an intern, and returned in 2012 to work in the Alliance's administrative group department. She has experience working with the Alliance's accounting team to ensure fiscal responsibility and accountability, and administering federal, state, and local grants for economic and workforce development. She currently serves as the director of the Chamber Leadership SWLA program, and has recently been named as the Alliance Foundation Director where she will lead the organization's revenue generating activities, including the SWLA on the Move Capital Campaign. She will facilitate investor relations and engagement efforts in regional economic development. Duplechian is a native and lifelong resident of SWLA. She is a graduate of Grand Lake High School and McNeese State University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and a Master of Business Administration. She is also a 2016 graduate of the Leadership SWLA program and has completed Year One of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for Organization Management.



Michelle McInnis, Director of Major Events and Workforce Development Coordinator:

McInnis joined the Alliance as regional director of workforce development in 2016. She came to work for the SWLA Economic Development Alliance as Regional Director of Business and Workforce Director in September of 2015. McInnis's responsibilities at the Alliance include coordinating and planning programs and major events for the alliance, as well as member-driven committees such as the Small Business Committee, Women's Business Network and the Education and Workforce Committee. She earned a Bachelor of Science from McNeese State University in Business Management with a concentration in Marketing and a minor in Psychology. After college, McInnis began her career at the Calcasieu Parish Library as a Children's Librarian, and moved on to

become Director of Children's Programming for the 13 branch library system. After 10 years with the Library System, she went to work for United Way of Southwest Louisiana, where she managed and secured grants, reviewed budgets and led funding decisions for over 35 agencies as Senior Director of Collective Impact.



Morgan Turpin, Economic Development and Research Director:

Turpin joined the SWLA Economic Development Alliance Team in 2013. As the Economic Development Specialist, she oversaw data collection and reporting for the Southwest Louisiana Housing Strategic Plan and Implementation Strategy. She has also conducted economic development research, providing information to the business community, developers, and local government agencies. Turpin will be assuming the roles and responsibilities of the Economic Development and Research Director by responding to requests for proposals (RFPs) and requests for information (RFIs) from Louisiana Economic Development (LED) and other inquirers. She will support site selection and site certification

endeavors, conduct Business Expansion and Retention visits, and complete all research and data compilation for the Alliance's data center. Turpin has a double degree in Marketing and Management and a Master of Business Administration from McNeese State University. She is currently undergoing certification courses to become a Certified Louisiana Economic Developer (CLED) through the Louisiana Industrial Development Executives Association (LIDEA).