

Triad Economic development group names new key executive

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Business Journal
Jun 9, 2020, 6:50am EDT

Following a nationwide search, Greater Winston-Salem Inc. has found its latest executive not far from home. [The organization, a merger of the former Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce and Winston-Salem Business Inc.](#), has named [Laura Johnson Lee](#) as senior vice president of economic development.

Lee will lead a division responsible for recruiting new business and industry, developing new businesses and supporting existing businesses' retention and expansion needs.

A graduate of Wake Forest University, Lee returns to Winston-Salem from Raleigh, where she served as business recruitment manager for the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. There, she was responsible for attracting new business into North Carolina markets, including the Triad. As EDPNC's only industry-specific recruiter, her projects focused on food and beverage processing and value-added agriculture. She was successful in helping attract more than 2,400 jobs and \$365 million in capital investment.

A native North Carolinian, she grew up in Wilson. She earned an undergraduate degree in communications and entrepreneurship and a masters of science in management at Wake Forest.

"Laura was a standout candidate not only for her keen understanding of innovative economic recruitment strategies and North Carolina's regional assets, but also for her genuine appreciation for Winston-Salem and Forsyth County," [Greater Winston-Salem President and CEO Mark Owens said](#). "As a former resident, Laura makes it clear that she is ready to advocate for a community she believes in."



Lee previously held economic development positions in Asheville and Savannah, Georgia. She was drawn to Winston-Salem by the community's sense of collaboration.

"I am eager to partner closely with our business community and city and county partners to match their goals for Winston-Salem," Lee said. "Being inclusive in economic development is the only successful way to move a community forward."

Set to begin her new role in mid-July, Lee added the economic recovery from Covid-19 presents mid-markets such as Winston-Salem with opportunity for growth.

"Covid-19 has cast a new light on our business community and challenged a traditional approach to economic development," Lee said. "We are faced with an unprecedented opportunity to capitalize on our strengths and pivot to new platforms to showcase our county to lead us into a strong economic recovery."