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NEW PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS ALLIANCE WILL LEAD ST. LOUIS REGION TO CREATE A WORLD-CLASS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Business Leaders Invest \$4 Million in St. Louis Regional Economic Development Alliance

ST. LOUIS – (JANUARY 31, 2019) Top business leaders from the St. Louis Regional Chamber, Civic Progress and the Regional Business Council announced today that they have come together to launch a world-class private sector economic development effort that will attract and retain businesses, jobs and top talent for the St. Louis region.

At the Regional Chamber’s board of directors meeting, key business leaders announced the formation of the **St. Louis Regional Economic Development Alliance**, a subsidiary of the Regional Chamber with its own board and CEO. The sole focus of the Alliance will be regional business recruitment and expansion services. The Alliance will include the Chamber’s economic development team along with additional resources and staffing to ramp-up private sector business recruitment and job growth for the 15-county bi-state St. Louis metropolitan region.

“With national and international competition for jobs becoming more and more intense, the St. Louis region needs to grow faster than we are today,” said St. Louis Regional Chamber Board Chair Tom Minogue, chair of Thompson Coburn. “The Alliance will have strong support from leading businesses to drive regional economic development. And, we’ll work collaboratively with state and local organizations to move the region forward—faster and better than ever before.”

Suzanne Sitherwood, president and CEO of Spire, will serve as board chair for the Alliance. Sitherwood also serves on the boards of Civic Progress and the Regional Chamber. “The Alliance is designed to be a top-level private sector service for businesses considering locating and expanding in the St. Louis region,” said Sitherwood. “Our goal is to create a world-class economic development organization that brings the business community together to act and speak with one voice in telling the amazing story of the St. Louis region.”

The model for the St. Louis Alliance is based on extensive national research on peer economic development organizations that have been successful in bringing together private sector economic development efforts. Sitherwood said, “To take us to the next level, we did our homework, and we’ve selected a CEO who’s a champion for our region with a proven track record for driving economic development and business growth, Steve Johnson.”

“Successful economic development at the regional level means making it easy for clients to explore all possible solutions throughout the metro,” said Johnson. We will be collaborative, strategic and accountable for delivering measurable results. That’s what we need to compete more successfully

against other regions.” Johnson currently serves as the CEO of Missouri Partnership, a public-private economic development partnership that leads business recruitment in Missouri. Prior to Missouri Partnership, Steve’s economic development experience included guiding the St. Louis Regional Chamber’s economic development initiatives as well as leading business attraction for the Kansas City Area Development Council and chambers of commerce in Mobile, Alabama, and Jefferson City, Missouri, his hometown.

To support this effort, regional business leaders have committed multi-year investments to provide the Alliance with a \$4 million budget. The St. Louis Regional Chamber’s current economic development staff will transfer to the Alliance, which will share administrative and operational space with the Chamber. And, the Alliance will be led by a 15-member board of directors comprised of a dedicated group of influential business leaders committed to the region’s economic growth:

Suzanne Sitherwood (Spire) (Board Chair)

Warner Baxter (Ameren)

Ken Cella (Edward Jones)

David Farr (Emerson)

Bruce Holland (Holland Construction)

David Kemper (Commerce Bank)

Orvin Kimbrough (Midwest Bank)

Rich Liekweg (BJC)

Kathy Mazzarella (Graybar)

Tom Minogue (Thompson Coburn)

Michael Neidorff (Centene)

Randy Schilling (Board Paq/OPO)

David Steward (World Wide Technology)

Andy Taylor (Enterprise Holdings)

Greg Twardowski (Whelan Security)

“If we’re serious about growing the St. Louis region, and bringing in more businesses and talent, we need everyone to play a role—from family-owned businesses to publicly traded companies, from minority-owned to international businesses, and so much more—this will take all of us,” said Tom Chulick, president & CEO of the St. Louis Regional Chamber. “Now is the time for all businesses to get involved with the Chamber and support efforts to ensure a bright economic future for our community. This is a great opportunity for the private sector to work together, so we can grow together.”

Chulick added, “And as the Alliance focuses on business recruitment, the Chamber will become laser-focused on other elements necessary for economic growth. Things like business networking, advocacy at the local, state and federal levels, and assisting with regional branding, workforce, entrepreneurial and minority business initiatives. We couldn’t be more excited about this new initiative to move St. Louis forward.”

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