

PRESS RELEASE: Gunn Resigns as Chamber Executive Director

Jessica Gunn has announced her resignation as executive director of the Clarksville-Johnson County Chamber of Commerce, effective around the end of June.

Following Gunn's announcement, the Chamber Board of Directors on Tuesday named Matt Bewley as interim executive director. Bewley has served as the Chamber's community relations director since April of 2021.

Gunn has served with the Chamber since 2017 and was promoted to executive director in January of 2020. She said she is leaving the Chamber to pursue opportunities in private business in Johnson County.

"I have enjoyed my opportunity to work for the chamber and the community over the past five years," Gunn said. "I am grateful for all of the people that I have worked with. Johnson County truly has some amazing people working together to help one another. The Chamber would not have been as successful if there was not a team of businesses, a board of directors, and community members to support projects and events. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of it."

The Chamber's accomplishments under Gunn's leadership included helping the county secure a \$75,000 FUN Park Grant for a playground in Lamar and a \$50,000 T Mobile Grant for a stage in downtown Clarksville as well as the creation of a Junior Leadership Program. She also helped facilitate such events as the First Friday concert series, a hot air balloon festival, a county-wide adopt-a-highway cleanup program, downtown revitalization projects and numerous business and nonprofit workshops, job fairs and professional development opportunities.

"The Chamber and Johnson County have been so very fortunate to have an advocate like Jessica Gunn to help move our community forward," said Tonya Bush, chair of the Clarksville-Johnson County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. "On behalf of the board, I want to express our gratitude to Jessica for her commitment to help local businesses and for her efforts to promote Johnson County, far and wide. Her presence within the Chamber will very much be missed. We at the Chamber hate to see her go, but we are very thankful for her years of dedication and hard work."

Gunn led the Chamber through the Covid pandemic over the past two years.

"The leadership and initiative she displayed during the pandemic was instrumental in supporting and helping our local businesses," Bush said. "She not only helped retain and grow Chamber memberships, but she helped businesses apply for and receive Covid grants during this unprecedented time for our community."

Bewley served as a director on the Chamber board before joining the staff in 2021. He previously served as the campus pastor and worship director for Journey Church and as branch manager and financial service representative for Arvest Bank. As community relations director, he has helped the Chamber secure 75 new members in the past 18 months.

"Matt is fantastic with relationships; relationships with community, with businesses, and with teammates and partners on projects," Gunn said. "With his background in banking and community relations, he is very knowledgeable in finance, leadership, and management abilities. With his heart for serving others, I have faith that the Chamber is in good hands."

Bush said the Chamber board will meet later this month to discuss the executive director position.