

## **New Name and Executive Leadership Announced for Unified Economic Development Organization**

*Mark Owens to Lead Greater Winston-Salem Inc.*

(WINSTON-SALEM, NC, December 12, 2019) – As the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce and Winston-Salem Business Inc. (WSBI) work toward a combination that was approved unanimously by their two boards in October, a new name and executive leadership for the unified economic development organization is being announced.

The unified organization will be called Greater Winston-Salem Inc. and it will be led by Mark Owens, who will serve as its President and CEO. Owens, who has been the President and CEO of the Chamber since December 2017, will take on an expanded role of spearheading business attraction for Forsyth County.

“These announcements signal an exciting new day for economic development in Winston-Salem and surrounding communities,” said Jeff Lindsay, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Novant Health and Chairman of the Chamber’s board. “Our new name speaks in the language of innovative business and to the organization’s broader mandate of marketing all that the Greater Winston-Salem area offers for companies big and small.”

“In Mark Owens, we have a dynamic leader at the helm who brings years of experience and a fresh perspective to Winston-Salem,” said Cantey Alexander, Triad Regional President at BB&T, now Truist, and board Chair of WSBI. “He has been highly engaged in our community and we are confident that he will inject new energy into our economic development efforts both for existing companies and those we are working to attract.”

“I am thrilled to lead this unified organization to create a more vibrant and prosperous economy in Forsyth County,” Mr. Owens said. “As the Chamber has for its 134-year history, we will continue to foster a favorable environment for local businesses of all sizes, but we will now add to our mission the attraction of companies, entrepreneurs and talent from around the world to spur job growth.”

Robert Leak, Jr., who joined Winston-Salem Business Inc. in 1989 and has been President since 1991, will continue to lead WSBI through the effective date of the combination transaction. In addition, Mr. Leak is currently in discussions with local leaders about an important role in the community that will leverage his talent, vision and connections in the economic development space.

“We look forward to Bob’s future contributions to our community. He has a real talent and vision for economic development and is well-connected with site selection consultants and others who influence business location decisions,” Mr. Alexander noted.

A special committee formed to oversee the integration of the two organizations aims for the unified enterprise to be operational in 2020. Both the Chamber and WSBI continue regular operations in the interim.

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For interview requests with Mark Owens, Cantey Alexander, or Jeff Lindsay, please contact Ethanie Good, Director of Marketing and Communications for the Chamber: [egood@winstonsalem.com](mailto:egood@winstonsalem.com), 336-682-2955.