

PRESS RELEASE



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Consultant Connect Names Sharon Barnard One of North America's Top 50 Economic Developers of 2023

KALAMAZOO, Michigan – Consultant Connect, a consulting agency designed to bridge the gap between economic developers and site consultants, announces its 2023 list of North America's Top 50 Economic Developers. The economic development professionals selected for this list were nominated by their colleagues in both the economic development and site location consulting industries for excellent practices, innovation and success in building the communities they serve.

Each Top 50 Economic Developer will be featured starting June 1st through the selected social media channels of LinkedIn and Twitter, where each award recipient will have the opportunity to share industry knowledge, leadership insights and career wisdoms with fellow industry professionals. Consultant Connect strives to lift up the economic development industry by recognizing remarkable economic developers. Recipients will be presented their award at Consultant Connect's ECONOMIX event in Atlanta, GA November 30.

"The Consultant Connect team looks forward to releasing the Top 50 list every year because we believe that the work of economic developers is not only transformative to communities, but it is deeper than that. Each year jobs are created that impact individuals and their families. We are truly honored to provide a platform for North America's top economic developers to be recognized for the passionate commitment they have made to the communities they serve.

"This is a validation and commendation from leading site selection groups across the country that we submit proposals to, organize site visits for and have been fortunate enough to land projects from. They recognize the quality of work that Sharon and VEDC do on behalf of our Board, Investors and citizens of the Greater Victoria Region." Jonas Titas, CEcD, President, VEDC

“We are incredibly fortunate to have Sharon on our team. She has been a huge part of the success of VEDC over the years and this is well deserved public recognition of the excellence and commitment Sharon puts into her work every day on behalf of VEDC and all the residents of the Victoria region. There is a lot of momentum in the greater Victoria area currently for job creation and investment and this shows Sharon and VEDC are willing and ready to help lead us into what we expect to be a Golden Era of growth.” – Don Whitaker, VEDC Chairman and CFO, Keating Auto Group

Consultant Connect works to bridge the gap between leading economic developers and site location consultants through exclusive networking events, educational services and leadership development. Consultant Connect not only gives economic developers an inside look into the world of site selection – it gives them the applicable information necessary to propel their careers and communities forward. For more information, please visit www.consultantconnect.org.

VEDC, formed in 1982, is a private non-profit economic development membership organization serving the Cities of Victoria, Edna & Port Lavaca, Victoria & Calhoun Counties, the Port of Victoria and the surrounding area impacting the regional economy. VEDC has 6 public sector funding partners and 78 private sector investor members.

The key objectives of VEDC are to recruit new businesses, both international and domestic, to create jobs and increase the tax base, retain and expand existing business by assisting them to increase profitability through exports, strategic alliances, new project development and workforce development improvements. The complete list of North America’s Top 50 Economic Developers of 2023 includes:

Alba Penate-Johnson

Sugar Land Office of Economic Development

Alex Patrick

Birmingham Business Alliance

Ashley Richardson

Charleston County Economic Development

Barton Lowery

Georgia Department of Economic Development

Bob Kosek

Georgia Department of Economic Development

Bradley Harris

Georgia EMC

Brent Case

The Right Place, Inc.

Carl Rees, Cecd

ElectriCities of North Carolina

Casey Gilchrist

Greater Phoenix Economic Council

Chad Matheson

Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance

Chris Caves

Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce

Chris Gutierrez

Kansas City Area Development Council

Chris Masingill

St. Tammany Corporation

Clyde Higgs

Atlanta Beltline

Coleman Peiffer

Alliant Energy

Corky Peek

Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development

Daniel Silverman

Investissement Québec International

David Rodgers, CECD

Mobile Chamber of Commerce

David P. Rumbarger Jr. CECD

Community Development Foundation Tupelo

Diana Velazquez EDFP, PCED

Greater Irving Chamber of Commerce

Douglas E. Berry

Cleveland/Bradley Chamber of Commerce

Elaine Middleton

Fayetteville-Lincoln Co. Ind. Development Board

Dr. Eloisa Klementich, CECD

Invest Atlanta

Harold Gutzwiller

Hoosier Energy

James Bateman

Greenwood County

James Kohnstamm, CECD

Miami-Dade Beacon Council

Jason Ford, CECD

Frisco Economic Development Corporation

Jennifer Martin

Greater Oklahoma City Chamber

Joe Wallace

Coachella Valley Economic Partnership

John M. Hull

Roanoke Regional Partnership

Katherine O'Neill

One Spartanburg, Inc.

Katie Hogan

FPL Office of Economic Development

Kevin Carter, EDFP

Amarillo Economic Development

Kim Allen

Purdue Research Foundation

Lawrence McKinney CCE, CEcD, IOM

Norman Economic Development Coalition

Lee Crume

BE NKY Growth Partnership

Liberty A. Boyd CEcD, EDFP

American Electric Power

Mandy White

Greater Jackson Chamber

Meghan Welch

Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Nathan Zipper

Williamson, Inc.

Ralph Garcia

McAllen Economic Development Corporation

RJ Ball

Empire State Development

Ron Maloney

Northwest Arkansas Council

Sharon H. Barnard

Victoria Economic Development Corporation

Shawn Welcome

Louisiana Economic Development

Tami Petsche

Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce

Tyler Chaffee

Tennessee Valley Authority

Valerie Christofferson, EDFP

Consumers Energy

Valerie M. Pianta, MEDP

Hernando County Office of Economic Development

Veronica Crock

Alabama Department of Commerce