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News

Consensus building *Goal of new BAACC president*

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Similar to the entities that are the Broken Arrow Area Chamber of Commerce and separate but similar, the BA Economic Development Corp., Wes Smithwick's goal is to bring out the best of both of these organizations.

So too, as the incoming BAACC and EDC president, Smithwick wants to build a consensus between the community at large and the business community.

"I am incredibly excited about this opportunity and I cannot think of anything in the world that I am more passionate about," said Smithwick from his office at the BAACC.

"I'm a BA advocate and I see myself in this role as being one of the town criers, if you will."

As such, Smithwick wants to gain the community's attention.

"I have spent the past several weeks meeting with people in the community, people from various backgrounds and capacities," Smithwick said, "in order to learn what their concerns are and give them information in hopes of building a consensus among the various groups and interests."

Though he declined to give specific details about plans so early in his role, Smithwick is certain of this: "I will continue to spend a lot of time listening to people because it will help me gauge where we are [as a Chamber] and where we need to improve."

Smithwick is a single parent whose daughter is involved in competitive cheerleading and attends BA High School. He is from Sylacauga, Ala., and he decided to move to BA after a realtor drove him down Main Street.

"I moved to BA 10 years ago when I made a career change," Smithwick said, "and once I got here, I was working in telecommunications. Someone convinced me to run for on the school board. I was on the school board for about four years."

It was there that Smithwick began to gain an understanding of Broken Arrow.

"I left the school board and worked for BA Public Schools for two years, and from there I worked on my own as an independent consultant before coming here to the BAACC," Smithwick said.

Smithwick thinks that most economic growth today is through small businesses.

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"Most economic growth today is not in big business," he said, "it's in existing small businesses and we plan to offer assistance to small businesses to promote growth."

Smithwick also added that helping small businesses is one of his passions, but his outlook on what is happening – and what he thinks needs to occur in the city – is part of his mission.

"I am excited about continuing the momentum that the city is experiencing in different places. I also believe in dreaming big.

"If there are barriers in the way of economic growth in BA, we need to find a way as a community to go around them."

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