

Greenville, SC's Leading Economic Developer Stepping Down at GADC

Mark Farris recognized for "contributions to Greenville County economic development" with over \$3.9 billion invested, 17,900 jobs created during tenure

GREENVILLE, SC, USA, August 30, 2023

/EINPresswire.com/ -- After an exemplary 38-year economic development career producing thousands of new jobs and billions of dollars in investment, [Greenville](#) Area Development Corporation President & CEO J. [Mark Farris](#) -- who has led the [GADC's](#) record-setting economic development initiatives since Fall of 2014 -- has announced his retirement from the organization effective October 1, 2023.



Mark Farris is CEO of the GADC

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"Under Mark Farris' leadership, thousands of jobs were created and billions of dollars invested right here in Greenville County, South Carolina, ensuring consistent and positive economic growth." "

Jim Burns, Chair, GADC Board of Directors

The GADC Board announced that it will conduct a national search for Farris' successor. Kevin Landmesser, the GADC's second-ranked executive who joined the organization in July 2001, will serve as interim President & CEO until a successor is named.

Under Farris' direction, the GADC has announced more than 17,959 new jobs and \$3.9 billion in capital investment in the county for more than 220 projects managed. An economic impact study conducted in 2022 by USC's Moore School of Business showed that GADC's economic impact on Greenville County now exceeds \$6 billion annually, with a cumulative impact since 2001 of over \$55 billion. GADC

has also announced in excess of 35,000 jobs and \$6.7 billion in new capital investment here, benefiting the community's tax base.

The Greenville Area Development Corporation was created by County Council in 2001 and tasked with promoting and enhancing quality of life in Greenville County by facilitating job growth and investment for the benefit of Greenville County and its citizens. Under Farris' leadership, GADC adopted its first-ever Economic Development Strategic Plan in 2022, establishing clear and measurable metrics in the arenas of Business Attraction & Retention, Expansion of Tools & Sites for development, and Organizational Outreach & Capacity. The plan also identifies five key industries of focus for Greenville's development into the future.



Among numerous economic development accomplishments during Farris' nine-plus years of leadership have been more than 220 announcements across Greenville County, including such notable wins as Bosch Rexroth, Michelin, Lockheed Martin, Lima One Capital, GE, Kiyatec, ScanSource, Pierburg, AVX, Verizon, and more.

In addition, Farris' leadership has been pivotal in such critical initiatives as establishing Greenville's first new industrial park in 20 years – Fox Hill Business Park, now home to multiple companies with more on the near horizon. GADC also prioritized current company support by establishing the organization's first existing industry program, branded as Industry Engage, and has worked diligently to encourage new developers to invest here, resulting in over 20 new speculative buildings.

Farris ably led GADC through the turbulent times associated with the COVID pandemic, partnering with the Greenville Chamber, Greenville County and its municipalities to establish the first set of response guidelines called the Greater Greenville Pledge – providing safety protocols for business and industry struggling to cope with one of the most challenging periods in history.

GADC has also partnered extensively with county municipalities, SCTAC, Greenville Chamber, SCbio, SC Department of Commerce and others on community-benefiting initiatives.

"Throughout his tenure as President and CEO, Mark Farris has gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure positive economic growth. Under Mark's leadership, thousands of jobs were created and billions of dollars invested right here in Greenville County," said GADC Board Chair

Jim Burns. "Mark has also done an exceptional job of building a team that is one of the most respected economic development organizations in all of America."

Under Farris' leadership, the GADC has built a diverse, talented and experienced team of economic development veterans, Burns noted. "The caliber of the GADC team is recognized coast-to-coast as one of the most experienced and capable economic development groups anywhere. With an average of over 20 years of professional experience each in economic development, our community benefits from a team of professionals who ensure that Greenville County will not miss a beat."

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Greenville County during the last nine years and will enter retirement knowing that we added value to this community during that time," said Farris. "Early in my life and by example, my parents taught me that leadership is not about issuing directions but rather working diligently in service to others. And I am looking forward to finally having the time to do more backpacking and hiking!"

A graduate of Clemson University with a B.A. degree in Political Science and Secondary Education and a master's degree in city & Regional Planning, Farris is also a graduate of the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma and a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD). He began his professional career with the Anderson County Planning and Development Board before being named Director of the York County Economic Development Board. While with GADC, he has served on boards including the Greenville Chamber, United Way of Greenville County, and Visit Greenville.

Farris is a former President of the South Carolina Economic Developers Association and past Director of the Southern Economic Development Council. He has been honored with Area Development's Thesis Award for "The I-85 Corridor of Economic Development in South Carolina" and named to Greenville's 50 Most Influential People and Business Hall of Fame. He is a graduate of Leadership South Carolina and is married to Erin R. Farris with whom he has three grown sons.

"Greenville County is enormously grateful to Mark not only for his years of tremendous contribution to this community, but also for his development and cultivation of a strong and talented team that will ensure Greenville County remains on the right course," said Dan Tripp, Chair of Greenville County Council and a GADC Board Member. "Mark is leaving our community in a better place than when he arrived here and has prepared us well to enter a new and exciting era for Greenville. We could not be more appreciative of his contributions."

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