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Commerce Welcomes New Executive Staff

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Department of Commerce (Commerce) recently welcomed new associates to its executive staff, including Thomas Grossnicklaus as Chief of Staff/General Counsel, Evan Brown as Director of Legislative Affairs, Amy Loftis-Walton as Deputy Director of Business Development, and Hopper Smith as State Director of Aerospace & Defense.

“I am very excited for these new additions to the Commerce team,” said Brent Kisling, Commerce Executive Director. “They each bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that I am confident will help us better serve Oklahomans, businesses and our communities.”

Thomas Grossnicklaus, Chief of Staff/General Counsel, previously served as an Assistant Attorney General for Oklahoma. His experience also includes serving as a certified early settlement mediator, as a law clerk for the Oklahoma Supreme Court, in the office for a U.S. Congressman and on a successful re-election campaign, and in the Executive Office of the Governor of Oklahoma. Thomas also served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Designated Marksman Section Leader in a Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team.

A first-generation college graduate, Thomas has a bachelor’s degree from Oklahoma City University (OCU), a law degree from OCU and is earning a public leadership credential from Harvard Kennedy School.

Evan Brown, Director of Legislative Affairs, joined Commerce as Deputy Director of Business Development in 2020. In his new role, Evan will serve as an advisor and liaison to the Executive Director in managing and coordinating legislative functions, both state and federal, across the agency.

Previously, Evan served in the Executive Office of the Governor of Oklahoma as a Legislative Aide and then as State Field Director. Evan has a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration and Management from the University of Oklahoma.



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Amy Loftis-Walton, Deputy Director for Business Development, joins Commerce following her position as Director of Government Relations and Strategic Initiatives for the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology. Her new role with Commerce will focus on increasing domestic and international investment in the state of Oklahoma.

Previously Amy spent 10 years in nonprofit as the Director of Business Development working to advance strategic plans, protect agency interests and increase funding. Amy earned a master's degree from the University of Oklahoma.

Hopper Smith, State Director of Aerospace and Defense, joins Commerce as a retired Brigadier General from the Army National Guard and a former state legislator. Hopper brings more than 35 years of military and civilian executive experience in multiple professional domains. Most recently, he served as the Director of the Workers Comp Commission for the State of Oklahoma. Hopper has a bachelor's degree in Geology from Oklahoma State University. He also is a graduate of the National Defense Intelligence College and the Army War College, receiving master's degrees from both.

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