

ELGIN COURIER

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The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has just hired an experienced economic developer. Joe Newman was selected as Director of Economic Development. He was the head of the Greater Bastrop Economic

Development Corporation for more than 11 years.

"I really believe adding Mr. Newman to our team in Elgin is a home run," said Elgin EDC board chairman David Glass. "Joe brings so much Central Texas development knowledge to the table."

Newman announced his resignation as CEO of the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation on March 3. He will officially begin his position in Elgin on May 1. The EDC has agreed to pay him a salary of \$79,000 a year.

City Manager Greg Vick announced Newman's role as the new head of Elgin's EDC on Friday, April 8. Vick, who has been Interim City Manager since September and is now working on a month-to-month basis, had been serving as part-time CEO of the EDC. The EDC Board asked him to begin looking for a full-time EDC director on March 8.

Vick expressed confidence in Newman's ability as an economic developer, saying "He's one of the best in the state."

Celeste LaRocca, spokesperson for Smithville Regional Hospital, also gave Newman high marks. "I have worked with Joe Newman for many years," she said. "He brings to the table the strongest local, regional and national connections to increase economic growth for the city and communities he serves. His strengths include his business knowledge, his energy and his passion for his

industry. Hats off to Elgin for hiring the right professional for the job!"

Newman said several factors made him pick the Elgin position over other opportunities. "One, the city is ripe for development and is centrally located on U.S. 290 and SH 95. Traffic counts are high because it's one of the main corridors between Houston and nearby Austin. Samsung's new multi-billion dollar fab facility is close by and a huge solar cell facility will soon be built within Elgin ISD's boundary."

Newman said he is especially excited about the Austin Community College campus that will soon be built on 94 acres in Elgin. "The college will help train the Elgin area workforce and contribute to the companies who I anticipate will take advantage of our location, transportation and quality infrastructure."

What does the future hold for Elgin? Newman said the focus will be on retail at first. "We've been very successful at getting retail and hotels in Bastrop," he said.

Newman said he grew up in Ennis, south of Dallas and he likes watching small communities grow. He said the seeds for his recent career change were sewn last fall when he attended a joint meeting of the Elgin council and EDC and hit it off with some of the members, who suggested he consider working for Elgin if he ever left Bastrop.

Newman lives just over 18 miles from Elgin and said he will likely move to Elgin in a year or two. "I want to become part of the community," he said. "I like to volunteer for organizations and boards." He is on the board for the Bastrop Education Foundation, was president-elect of the Bastrop Rotary Club (he resigned that post upon accepting his new job in Elgin, but is still a member). For six years he was executive director of the Texas Economic Development Council.