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Janke to retire after decades of fostering growth in Beloit

By AUSTIN MONTGOMERY Staff Writer

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Janke

BELOIT — Beloit Economic Development Director Andrew Janke is retiring in January after a long career that's helped shape the city's economic redevelopment and growth.

Janke started with the city as the Downtown Beloit Association Director in September of 1987 before being promoted to Economic Development Director in 2001. During his tenure, the Greater Beloit area has added over 4,500 jobs and has seen over \$1.85 billion in private capital investment. He's literally been involved in projects from A to Z—or from Amazon to Zen Sushi.



“My work here has always been about trying to support positive and lasting change with the full knowledge that the opening of the new bagel store on State Street that created five jobs was just as important as the opening of a one million-square-foot distribution center on the edge of town that created 500 jobs,” Janke said. “It has been this broad diversity of work that has made my job so challenging and gratifying. They are all as important in the long run to the economic health of this community.”



Beloit City Manager Lori Curtis Luther added, “We deeply appreciate his significant career and the positive impact Andrew has made on Beloit over the last few decades. Andrew’s work ethic and commitment to making Beloit a stronger community has been exemplary. He has made a lasting impact on Beloit’s economy, and his legacy will shine bright.”

Janke will also be stepping away from executive director of the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation (GBEDC). The GBEDC and City of Beloit partnered in 2001 to develop the Gateway Business Park, and has spurred economic development ever since adding 11 major businesses that have created nearly 2,500 jobs.

“When Andrew let me know he had made the decision to retire my first reaction was to try and talk him out of it, but as I let his decision sink in, my thoughts turned to celebrating a job well done,” said GBEDC Board President Frank McKearn. “He is the definition of a job well done. Never one to seek the limelight, Andrew has been a firm

but gentle hand in guiding the Greater Beloit Area and ensuring that we are well positioned for the next opportunity. He has also made sure that the positive message of our community is communicated and celebrated.”

The city and GBEDC will launch a nationwide search for an economic development director with the intention of having the next economic development director start prior to Janke’s retirement.

Austin Montgomery