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Clint O'Neal

AEDC

Executive Director

Clint O'Neal is the Executive Director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. Clint is passionate about making a difference by helping communities win economic development projects and helping companies to be successful in Arkansas.

Clint started his economic development career in 2007 as a Project Manager at AEDC. He served as the Vice President of Business Recruitment for the Missouri Partnership starting in 2011 before moving back to his home state in 2018 to be the Deputy Director of Global Business at AEDC. Clint was named Executive Director by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders in January 2023.

Clint is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma and is a Certified Economic Developer through the International Economic Development Council. He holds a Master's degree in Community and Economic Development from the University of Central Arkansas.
Clint and his wife, Heather, live in Conway with their four children:
Chloe, Ellie, Ava, and Caleb.

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Demetria Kimbrough

Arkansas Dept. of Energy and Environment,DEQ

Deputy Director

Demetria Kimbrough is the Deputy Director of the Office of Air Quality at the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

She has a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and mathematics from Philander Smith College and a Master of Public Health degree with an emphasis on Environmental and Occupational Health from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences – Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health.

Ms. Kimbrough has served in various capacities at DEQ, including Inspector Supervisor, Enforcement Coordinator, Asbestos and Enforcement Supervisor, and Environmental Operations Manager where she has worked diligently to advance DEQ's mission of protecting, enhancing, and restoring the natural environment for the well-being of all Arkansans.

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Cindy Lewis

UAMS

Associate Dean, Office of Admissions & Alumni Director.

Cyntia Lewis is an experienced Safety, Health, and Training Professional with a strong record of leadership across petrochemical, manufacturing, aerospace, construction, higher education, and other industries.

She specializes in the development and auditing of Safety and Health Management Systems, Industrial Hygiene programs, and Learning and Development initiatives that strengthen compliance, reduce risk, and build sustainable safety cultures.

Cynthia currently serves as Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Student Recruitment, Alumni Affairs, and Outreach, as well as Director of the Office of Professional Development and Program Evaluation at the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health at UAMS.

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Mike Miller

National Environmental Services

Senior Vice President

Mike Miller is a Senior Vice President and National Environmental Market Leader for SCS Engineers, where he leads environmental strategy and technical direction across the firm's 82 offices and more than 1,400 employees. With over 32 years of environmental consulting and management experience, he has directed projects throughout the United States and routinely supports clients with environmental due diligence related to mergers and acquisitions, real estate transactions, brownfield redevelopment, environmental auditing, regulatory compliance, permitting, planning, and remediation.

For this presentation, Mike brings extensive experience in the development and implementation of environmental, health, and safety (EH&S) programs for complex, multi-site industrial operations. He has successfully designed and managed EH&S compliance and risk management initiatives across a diverse range of industries, including agricultural processing, chemical manufacturing, distribution and transportation, metals, manufacturing, and pharmaceutical operations.

Mike is a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM) with specialized expertise in Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) compliance and hazardous waste management. He has conducted multimedia compliance audits for organizations ranging from single-site facilities to large, geographically dispersed enterprises, including engagements performed under voluntary compliance programs, audit privilege protections, and regulatory enforcement actions. His experience spans waste characterization, handling and storage practices, waste profiling, permitting, transportation, and the management and disposal of hazardous, special, and non-hazardous waste streams. This depth and breadth of experience uniquely position him to help clients navigate complex waste management challenges while maintaining regulatory compliance and operational efficiency.

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Buck Ray Olsson

Senior Scientist

Buck is a senior scientist and the endangered species permit lead for Olsson. He has 20 years of experience in natural resources management with an emphasis on Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance, endangered species assessments, and environmental permitting.

He previously served more than eight years with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation in various roles including manager of the Stream Management and Restoration Program, statewide coordinator for the Environmental Program, and aquatic biologist for the Wildlife Diversity Program.

Buck holds a federal ESA Section 10 Recovery Permit for more than a dozen listed species in multiple taxonomic groups across the Midwest. His expertise includes performing survey and status assessments of listed and rare species across the Midwest and providing technical state and federal regulatory permitting expertise on projects including Clean Water Act Section 404 permitting, ESA Section 7 and Section 10 consultation, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) coordination.

As a project manager and technical expert, Buck assists clients including private developers, municipalities, state and federal agencies, and engineers through the environmental compliance process and implementation of regulatory compliance programs during project planning and final design.

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Mike Reynolds

Clean Harbors Environmental Services

District Manager

With more than 30 years of experience in the environmental services industry, this speaker brings extensive expertise in remediation, waste disposal, wastewater treatment, emergency management, PFAS and AFFF services, and environmental consulting.

Their career combines deep industry knowledge with a strong background in customer relations, helping organizations navigate environmental challenges and identify practical solutions.

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Ray Weida

Olsson

Senior Engineer

Ray is an environmental engineer with Olsson who focuses on environmental permitting and compliance. Ray holds a master's degree in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Missouri - Columbia and is licensed as a PE in 12 states. Ray has worked in the environmental field for 33 years with 7 years spent with DEQ as a no-discharge and NPDES permit writer and 26 years with FTN and Olsson. At Olsson, Ray specializes in NPDES permitting, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs), and Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) plans.

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Walter G. Wright

Mitchell Williams Law Firm

Attorney

Walter Wright has more than 30 years of extensive experience in environmental, energy (petroleum marketing) and water law. He counsels clients on issues involving environmental permits, compliance strategies, enforcement defense, property redevelopment issues, environmental impact statements and procurement/management of water rights. He advises developers, lenders, petroleum marketers and others about effective strategies for structuring real estate and corporate transactions to address environmental financial risks.

Walter has a unique petroleum marketing practice which includes drafting and the negotiation of a variety of specialized agreements involving the sale or consignment of motor fuels, along with the ancillary agreements associated with the upstream segment of the petroleum industry. Since 1989, he has served as an adjunct professor of Environmental Law and Hazardous Substances Law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, William H. Bowen School of Law and he is the author of the Arkansas Environmental, Energy and Water Law blog.

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Meredith Lowry

Wright, Lindsey, Jennings

Partner

Meredith Lowry is a partner and registered patent attorney at Wright Lindsey Jennings, where her practice focuses on acquisition and licensing of various aspects of intellectual property rights for companies working in the retail space. From the products on the shelf, the packages they go in, and the platforms they're sold on, Meredith advises businesses on intellectual property concerns and data privacy and security matters.

Meredith is a frequent speaker on design patents, artificial intelligence, and women's entrepreneurship. Meredith spearheaded the firm's Woman-Run initiative to support woman- and minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs through networking, mentorship, education and resources. Meredith was recently appointed chair of the Artificial Intelligence Task Force of the Arkansas Bar Association, which will develop recommendations and resources for AI use in the legal profession.

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Shannon Lynn

Trinity Consultants

Principal Consultant

Shannon Lynn serves as a Principal Consultant overseeing day-to-day operations of Trinity's Little Rock office, managing the consulting staff while assisting the regulated community of Arkansas and western Tennessee with a variety of environmental compliance issues. He is involved in state, Title V, and Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permitting projects, the evaluation of control and monitoring technologies, and MACT compliance assistance.

Shannon has significant compliance support, permitting, and auditing experience in the chemical, oil and gas, agricultural, and general manufacturing industries. He has managed permitting projects ranging from minor modifications to multi-billion dollar capital projects. He has performed consent decree-based and internally driven compliance audits at chemical plants with topics ranging from general Title V compliance to historical PSD applicability issues. He also serves as an instructor for Trinity's training course, Air Quality Permitting in Arkansas, and is a frequent speaker at multiple industry workshops.

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Eric Beightel

Environmental Science Associates

Federal Strategy Director

Eric Beightel is the Federal Strategy Director at Environmental Science Associates (ESA), where he leads the firm's federal policy practice and advises public- and private-sector clients on infrastructure policy, environmental review, permitting, and project delivery. He previously served as the Presidentially appointed Executive Director of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council, the federal agency responsible for improving the transparency, predictability, and timeliness of the federal environmental review and authorization process for major infrastructure projects.

Eric recently testified before Congress on federal permitting reform and the institutional changes needed to deliver infrastructure more efficiently while maintaining credible environmental review. Drawing on experience spanning federal policy and project implementation, he helps organizations understand how legislative, regulatory, and administrative changes affect infrastructure development in practice.
His current work also focuses on the intersection of artificial intelligence, permitting, and public policy. He is advancing AI-enabled tools and approaches that make complex federal requirements more accessible, strengthen policy analysis, and help practitioners navigate an increasingly dynamic permitting landscape. Eric is a frequent speaker on federal infrastructure policy, permitting reform, and the role of emerging technology in environmental decision-making.

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Mark Allison

Wright, Lindsey, Jennings

Partner

As an attorney recognized with Martindale-Hubbell's highest rating (AV-Distinguished), Mark is highly regarded by clients and the legal community on the whole for his ethical standards, experience and proven record as one of the leading environmental lawyers in Arkansas. Companies large and small turn to Mark and his team to help navigate regulatory issues. Throughout his more than 35 years in practice.

Mark uses his in-depth knowledge and his ability to successfully represent his clients' interests whether in the boardroom, legislative or regulatory agency or the courts. Mark is a member of the American Bar Association (natural resources, environmental and energy law, science and technology and law firm management sections); Arkansas Bar Association (past chair, environmental law and agriculture sections; tenured member of the House of Delegates); Arkansas Bar Foundation (past board member); and Arkansas Environmental Federation (board member).

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Sean McCarron

Onterris

CSP

Sean McCarron is a Certified Safety Professional (CSP) and licensed occupational therapist for Onterris. He has 20 years of health, safety, and environmental experience in the healthcare, manufacturing, oil/gas, and utility industries. His expertise includes managing projects to include environmental due diligence, HSE management systems, and behavior-based safety.

He has been responsible for leading health and safety teams to support injury and spill prevention and regulatory compliance in the Arkansas Fayetteville Shale and other oil and gas plays. He has developed leadership training, operations startup, safety and emergency procedures, and operational therapy. His strengths include leadership, project management, time management, problem solving, and public speaking.

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Britt Scheer

Veolia

Director of Facility Affairs

Britt Scheer is the Director of Facility Affairs for Veolia - Gum Springs Operations in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. He is responsible for Public Affairs, Government Affairs, Regulatory Affairs, and Union Management as well as overall Environmental Responsibilities for the facility. Britt also assists in development of new projects, technical aspects of current operations, and some key account commercial responsibilities. Britt was the General Manager of the Gum Springs facility for a total of 12-years and led the commercialization of the plant for Alcoa as well as being key in facilitating the sale of the location to Veolia.

Britt is an Arkansas native and graduate of Arkansas Tech University, he has also earned a MS in Environmental Engineering. He has a broad range of global experience in Environmental, Health, and Safety, Six-Sigma, Lean Manufacturing, Production Management, Commercial Sales/Negotiation, Change Management, Value Identification/Optimization, and both Public and Regulatory Affairs, specializing in Hazardous Waste Incineration/Landfill and Primary Aluminum Production.

Britt is proud to have retired from Alcoa with 24-years of service having held roles at several locations with progressive leadership responsibilities over his career. Britt has worked for Veolia since January 2020 and looks forward to commissioning the Gum Springs Modernization Project and continues to work to secure jobs and projects for Veolia in Arkansas.

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Laura Weems

AIHA

Member

Laura Hartline Weems is the interim President of the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) Arkansas Local Section, Chair of the AIHA Incident Preparedness Working Group, and Past Chair of the AIHA Safety Committee. She is currently a Federal safety and occupational health manager. Prior to entering Federal service as a civilian, Laura served 20 years as an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard focusing on the areas of pollution prevention, emergency response, and worker health and safety.

While in the Coast Guard, she earned a Master of Science degree from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell in Industrial Hygiene and later earned another Master of Science degree in Emergency Management and Homeland Security from Arkansas Tech, thereby combining her two main interests. Ms. Weems is certified in the fields of Industrial Hygiene, Safety Professional, and Hazardous Materials Manager.

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Braden Gilbert

Micro-Bac International

Owner and Vice President of Business Development and Sales

Upon graduating, I joined Discord Agency, working in the esports and tech industry. My role involved designing and managing branded Discord servers, fostering community engagement, and leading sales efforts. This experience solidified my reputation as a leader in the esports community.

My journey took a significant turn when I joined Micro-Bac International at its lowest point. As the head of Global Business Development and Sales, I faced the challenge of revitalizing the company. With no employees left to teach or train me, I relied on former employees, industry connections, borrowed textbooks, and extensive research into past case studies. I meticulously read email transcripts and taught myself everything needed to rebuild Micro-Bac in the oil field.

In my role at Micro-Bac International, I focused on improving education, enhancing distributor relationships, and driving sales goals. I built a strong team and achieved significant milestones, including transforming oil-contaminated play sand back into usable play sand and significantly improving the company's profitability.

With careful planning, deliberate action, and measured steps, I have been instrumental in turning Micro-Bac International into a successful bacteria manufacturer. The company was recently awarded the World Petroleum Congress’s award for innovation and excellence in 2024.

My journey from a scholarship esports streamer/caster to traveling the world working in esports, and now scaling a bacteria manufacturer, exemplifies my commitment to continuous learning and growth. I believe that with careful planning and deliberate action, we can achieve our goals.

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John R. Christy, Ph.D.

University of Alabama

Professor

Dr. John R. Christy is the Distinguished Professor of Atmospheric Science and Director of the Earth System Science Center at The University of Alabama in Huntsville where he began studying global climate issues in 1987. Since November 2000 he has been Alabama's State Climatologist. In 1989 Dr. Roy W. Spencer (then a NASA/Marshall scientist and now a Principal Research Scientist at UAH) and Christy developed a global temperature data set from microwave data observed from satellites beginning in 1979.

For this achievement, the Spencer-Christy team was awarded NASA's Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement in 1991. In 1996, they were selected to receive a Special Award by the American Meteorological Society "for developing a global, precise record of earth's temperature from operational polar-orbiting satellites, fundamentally advancing our ability to monitor climate." In January 2002 Christy was inducted as a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society.

Dr. Christy has served as a Contributor (1992, 1994, 1996 and 2007) and Lead Author (2001) for the U.N. reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in which the satellite temperatures were included as a high-quality data set for studying global climate change. He has served on five National Research Council panels or committees and has performed research funded by NASA, NOAA, DOE, DOT and the State of Alabama and has published many articles including studies appearing in Science, Nature, Journal of Climate and The Journal of Geophysical Research. Dr. Christy has provided testimony to several congressional committees.

Dr. Christy was married to the former Babs Joslin for almost 39 years until her death in 2014 of cancer. She was a fellow missionary whom he met in Kenya. Their two married children are, Mrs. Alison Fields, an Applied Math graduate of Auburn University and Brian, a Physics/Math graduate of Auburn and PhD graduate from University of Maryland. He is now a Post-Doc Physicist at Franklin and Marshall University. Garet and Alison Fields are parents of three of their grandchildren and Brian and Kristen Christy of two more. Recently, Dr. Christy and Sherry Upshaw, Associate Minister of Music and Organist at First Baptist Church Huntsville, were joined in marriage. Dr. Christy's favorite hobby is gold panning which he developed as a teenager in California, and he also runs, completing races from 2 to 31.1 miles over rugged terrain.