VEDA 2023 Spring Conference
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 – Friday, March 17, 2023

Speaker Profiles



Yuri Adams
Director of Economic Development
City of Williamsburg
VEDA Spring Conference Co-Chair

Adams is a born and raised Virginian and received her undergraduate degree from William & Mary.

In 2017, Adams joined the Williamsburg Economic Development Department as a Specialist and served in this role until 2021. As Economic Development Specialist, she managed the City's Business Retention program and received her certification as Business Retention & Expansion Coordinator (BREC) through Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI). In this role, she also managed the Economic Development Department's social media, newsletter, mobile app and website; administered the Economic Development Authority's business grant programs; and represented the City of Williamsburg on several regional initiatives including the Peninsula Home-Based Business Network and Start Peninsula, an annual entrepreneurial pitching competition.

Since 2021, she has served the City of Williamsburg as Economic Development Director. The department of three provides concierge service to both new and existing businesses, manages a $5 million Tourism Development Fund, serves as landlord of the Triangle Building, and staffs the Economic Development Authority, Tourism Development Grant Review Committee, Williamsburg Area Arts Commission and Williamsburg Public Art Council.

Her private sector experience includes serving as Marketing Coordinator for a structural engineering firm, where she managed the company's client retention and acquisition program. Her non-profit experience includes work as a shelter advocate at a local domestic and sexual violence shelter, providing counseling and support to area women and children.

Yuri's past community involvement includes serving as Chair of ASPIRE Young Professionals (2019), serving as executive secretary on the board of the Occasion for the Arts (2017-2020), and volunteering on the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce's Economic Growth Committee. Yuri is a proud member of the LEAD Greater Williamsburg Class of 2019 and was also a cast member of the 2020 Dancing with the Williamsburg Stars.

Yuri is also: a self-proclaimed Origami Aficionado, obsessed over all things Hello Kitty, and very bad at trivia. In her free time, she enjoys eating tacos and sushi (not necessarily at the same time), watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer reruns and spending time with her Australian Shepherd Quinn, her cat Peach Pit, and her husband Brad (not listed in order of preference).



Mallory Copeland Butler
Business Development Manager
City of Newport News, Department of Development
VEDA Spring Conference Co-Chair

With 35 years of experience at local and regional levels, Butler is a seasoned economic development professional with a broad base of experience. Presently, she is the Business Development Manager for the City of Newport News Department of Development where she is responsible for proactively executing initiatives and activities to facilitate business attraction, expansion, and retention when appropriate.

Previously, Butler worked for 20 years for the City of Portsmouth Department of Economic Development in roles progressing from Business Development Manager to Assistant Director and Director. Prior to that, she also worked for the City of Chesapeake Economic Development Department and with Forward Hampton Roads, the predecessor to the Hampton Roads Alliance.

Butler's career includes serving in roles ranging from research to marketing, business attraction with an emphasis on retail recruitment, redevelopment, and Enterprise Zone administration.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Mary Baldwin College and is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute. Butler achieved the designation of Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) through the International Economic Development Council in 2012.

She is a graduate of LEAD Peninsula and LEAD Hampton Roads. Butler has served as an instructor at the Virginia Institute for Economic Development at Virginia Tech and the Basic Economic Development Course at the University of North Carolina.

She is a past member of the boards of directors of the Virginia Economic Developers Association, the Virginia Downtown Development Association, the Tidewater Business Financing Corporation, and the Virginia Chapter of the International Council of Shopping Centers. Presently, she is a member of the International Economic Development Council, the Virginia Economic Developers Association, the Council of Development Finance Agencies, and the Hampton Roads Association of Commercial Real Estate.



Brandy Flint
Director of Economic Development
Rockbridge County
VEDA CEDA Chair

Brandy began her career with Rockbridge County as the Administrative Assistant in the Community Development Office in 2009. She was promoted to Business Development Assistant in 2012 and was appointed the Director of Economic Development in November 2021. Before her career in local government, Brandy spent many years in the private sector working in accounting, rental management, and construction office management.

During her years with Rockbridge, Brandy was part of the team that brought Devils Backbone's Outpost to the County. She has been a part of several expansions at local manufacturing plants; updated the County's comprehensive plan and website; is the Secretary for the County's EDA; and serves on numerous boards, commissions, and committees. She is currently developing the County's first strategic economic development plan.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Christopher Newport University and is working towards her Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) certification.

Brandy is an active member of her community, serving on the Rockbridge Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and as a member of the Town of Glasgow Community Development organization. She also volunteers for numerous community events and organizations, and enjoys all things outdoors, especially her river time.



Christina M. Winn
Executive Director
Prince William County Department of Economic Development
VEDA President

Christina Winn leads the Prince William County Department of Economic Development, catalyzing investment, retention, and redevelopment opportunities in the second largest county in Virginia.

By positioning the county as a leader in the fast-paced, evolving economy of the Washington, D.C. region, Ms. Winn is shaping stages for expansion and collaboration in key target industries, such as life sciences and biotech; distribution and logistics; and government contracting. She wants to create higher paying jobs for a highly educated and diverse workforce in Prince William County that will also build capacity for a flourishing entrepreneurial ecosystem.

With more than 20 years of economic development and private sector real estate experience, Ms. Winn is an expert in development programs including finance, incentives, and marketing. Since taking the helm of the department in 2019, Ms. Winn has implemented best practices and programs that attracted more than $4.9 billion in capital investment and 3,288 new and retained jobs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she led multiple grant programs, providing more than $16 million in assistance to the county's business community.

Ms. Winn earned her master's degree in real estate development from Johns Hopkins University and her bachelor's degree in economics from Arizona State University. She is serving as president for the Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA).



Jonathan Q. Morgan, Ph.D.
Professor of Public Administration and Government
University of North Carolina School of Government

Jonathan Morgan joined the School of Government in 2003, where he teaches, advises public officials, and conducts applied research on economic development. His research has focused on industry cluster-based development, the role of local government in economic development, business incentives, development impact analysis, and innovative, homegrown approaches to job creation. His articles have been published in leading journals such as *Economic Development Quarterly, Policy Studies Journal*, and *Community Development*. Morgan directs the Basic Economic Development Course at UNC, which is accredited by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC).

Prior to joining the School of Government, he worked for Regional Technology Strategies, Inc., an economic and workforce development consulting firm located in Carrboro, NC. He has also served as director of economic policy and research for the NC Department of Commerce, and research and policy director for the NC Institute of Minority Economic Development. He holds a B.A. in economics from the University of Virginia, an M.P.A. from Clark Atlanta University, and a Ph.D. in public administration from North Carolina State University.

Jonathan has authored articles/publications on various economic development topics such as local economic development strategy; business retention and expansion; innovation based economic development; regional clusters and jobs for inner city workers; state of the art measures in economic development; optimizing the use of economic development incentives; community development and affordable housing; and many more.

His fields of expertise are economic development and public administration.



Florence Kingston
Director
City of Newport News, Department of Development

Florence Kingston, Director of the City of Newport News' Department of Development since 2003, has applied her unstoppable energy and enthusiasm to local economic development and small business development for the past 43 years. Ms. Kingston has overseen and directly negotiated many of the transformative projects that are shaping Newport News as a vibrant, viable, business-friendly City that is attracting more than its fair share of positive economic news.

Florence is a life-long local – a graduate of Ferguson High School and The University of Virginia. She fosters and inspires a culture of thinking big and planning big, within her department, among City leadership, and as Secretary/Treasurer of the EDA-IDA – compelling all to compete on a global playing field. The result of Florence's dedication has been the implementation and securing of groundbreaking and momentous developments in Newport News such as:

- Ferguson Enterprises, which recently moved into its new eight-story, 260,000 square-foot headquarters building in City Center,
- City Center at Oyster Point, which in just 20 years has transformed an industrial site into a high-density, mixed-use Central Business District with over a million square feet of Class A office space, mixed-use retail and entertainment uses, more than 600 units of luxury residential development, and a 256-room full-service Marriott hotel and conference center,
- Liebherr USA recently completed a $45 million expansion with 3 new buildings totaling 251,000 square feet. Liebherr celebrated 50 years in Newport News with the completion of the expansion.
- the Apprentice School project, a $72 million mixed-use redevelopment project in the City's traditional downtown – the result of a complex collaborative effort between the City, the IDA, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Huntington Ingalls Incorporated, and Armada Hoffler Development Company,
- Downtown's new Yard District along 23rd Street Corridor fueled by significant private investment in redeveloping and converting historic warehouses into office space, a microbrewery, a micro-distillery, as well as mixed-use buildings with apartments,
- and major Southeast Community redevelopment initiatives, such as Jefferson Avenue Streetscape, the $30 million Choice Neighborhood Initiative, and the Brooks Crossing retail and office developments including the Brooks Crossing Innovation and Opportunity Center.

In addition to these large strategic wins for Newport News, Florence ensures the strong focus remains on retaining the City's current small and medium-sized businesses and promoting entrepreneurship. She proudly serves on the Board of Virginia Community Capital and assists other organizations promoting community-based investments.

Florence is a member of the Virginia Economic Developers Association and has received the organization's most prestigious award, the Cardinal Award.



Steven Wright
Director
City of Chesapeake, Economic Development

With more than 25 years of experience in Economic & Community Development, Steven Wright currently serves as Director of Economic Development for the City of Chesapeake. Steven has a B.S. degree in Urban Studies and Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, and is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute. This is his second stint in Chesapeake, having served as a Business Development Manager from 1994 to 1999. Before returning to Chesapeake, Steven was the Economic Development Director for Isle of Wight County. Additionally, he has worked in the communities of Richmond, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Chesterfield County, VA



James W. Noel, Jr.
Director, EVRIFA
Hampton Roads Alliance

Jim Noel served as the Economic Development Director for York County from 1993 to 2022. Prior to that Jim worked for the City of Portsmouth for 14 years in multiple capacities including the Department of Economic Development. During his tenure with the City of Portsmouth Jim earned a master's degree in Public Administration from Old Dominion University. His undergraduate degree is in Urban Studies from Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania.

Jim played a key role in expanding York County's tax base over the past 28 years and was instrumental in attracting several large retailers, as well as Great Wolf Lodge, that ultimately became a $100 million investment. He is very proud of being part of the team that developed Riverwalk Landing, a shopping and dining destination on the Yorktown waterfront that is a stellar example of community place making. Jim established York County's first formal business retention and expansion program and always made existing York County businesses his first priority.

Jim has served on multiple boards including the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance and the Small Business Development Center of Hampton Roads. He is a Past President of the Virginia Economic Developers Association and a recipient of the Cardinal Award, the organizations highest professional recognition.

Jim is currently working part time for the Hampton Roads Alliance managing the Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority. He also recently formed Noel Consulting Services LLC focusing on land use planning and permitting.



Christopher A. Morello
Director
Isle of Wight County Economic Development

Christopher "Chris" Morello has been *Director of Economic Development* for Isle of Wight County, since September 2018. Chris has more than 27 years of local government experience in Virginia and North Carolina. In Isle of Wight, and with 18 years of prior economic development work in Newport News, Chris has gained valuable experience in large-scale site and building development, industrial park management, capital budgeting and personnel management. He enjoys helping organize and foster strong and collaborative work teams for successful public-private partnerships that deliver major community projects. He is passionate about - and committed to - regional approaches to economic prosperity in Hampton Roads that strengthen competitiveness for business expansions and corporate attraction.

After graduating with a B.S. degree from James Madison University in 1989, Chris earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill in 1993. Both Chris and his wife, Katie, were born and raised in Newport News and are blessed with four children, one grandchild and a vibrant Yellow Lab.



Steve Cook
Chief Innovation Officer
Hampton Roads Workforce Council

Steve Cook is a long-time resident of Hampton Roads. He graduated from Christopher Newport University in 1987 earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Governmental Administration. He went on to receive a master's degree in Urban Affairs from Virginia Tech in 1991. He is also a graduate of the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute.

Steve has worked in economic development at the local and regional level in Virginia for over 25 years and is currently the Chief Innovation Officer overseeing the Business, Youth Services and Talent Alignment operations for the Hampton Roads Workforce Council.



Maynard Stowe
Apprenticeship Consultant
Virginia Department of Labor & Industry (DOLI)

Maynard Stowe has been with the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry Registered Apprenticeship Department since November of 2015. He is currently a Registered Apprenticeship Consultant in their Tidewater Region. Mr. Stowe has a long career history focusing on Adult Education and Training providing adults with career and educational opportunities.

He, along with the Department of Labor and Industry will assure that companies seeking to develop career and training development for their employees through Registered Apprenticeship will have the highest quality of service and dedication. Combining both on the job training and related instruction, Mr. Stowe will assist companies in focusing specifically on how Registered Apprenticeship can meet their long-term growth needs.

Localities served include Franklin City, Isle of Wight, James City, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Smithfield, Southampton, Suffolk, Surry, Wakefield, Waverly, and Williamsburg.



Dr. Latitia D. McCane
Director of Education, The Apprentice School
Newport News Shipbuilding

Dr. Latitia D. McCane is director of Education for The Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding, located in Newport News, Virginia. Named to this position in 2018, she is responsible for overall leadership, vision and strategic direction of craft training, academic delivery, student services, accreditation, and recruitment for a student body of 800 in addition to staff and faculty.

Since 2007 and prior to her current appointment at The Apprentice School, McCane held several leadership positions at Bishop State Community College, a two-year public institution with an enrollment of 3,400 students in Mobile, Alabama. She most recently served as dean of instructional services and was responsible for all academic programs across its four campuses. McCane also served as associate dean of instruction at Jefferson Davis Community College in Brewton, Alabama.

McCane earned doctoral degrees in urban higher education administration and education administration from Jackson State University and Lacrosse University. She holds graduate and undergraduate degrees in organic chemistry and chemistry from the University of Alabama and Texas Southern University. McCane is a member of the CIVIC Leadership Institute's Class of 2019 in Norfolk, Virginia. She is active in the community and serves on the board of directors for the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and New Horizons Foundation.



Joe Modica
Vice President
Service Executive Transportation Management
MBP

Joe Modica is a transportation service executive for MBP, a construction management firm headquartered in Fairfax, VA with local offices in Williamsburg and Chesapeake. He graduated from the University of Wyoming with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering and has more than 20 years of experience in the engineering and construction industry. His portfolio includes significant experience with local infrastructure projects and programs including roadways, site civil, utilities, and stormwater management. Some of his clients have included Norfolk, Hampton, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD), and Williamsburg.

Joe attended Louisiana State University, University of Maryland, Clemson University, and the University of Wyoming before graduating.



Pamela M. Nuby, PHR, SHRM-CP
HR Manager, Member Development
Office of Inclusion and Diversity
Human Resources Division
Canon Virginia, Inc.

Pamela Nuby is the HR Manager of Member Development and the Office of Inclusion and Diversity at Canon Virginia Inc.

Canon Virginia Inc., located on the Peninsula in Newport News, Virginia, is an advanced manufacturing company that collaborates with our customers, offering them our deep expertise, commitment, and engineering creativity to apply technology to solve problems. Canon is committed to manufacturing excellence and fierce and rigorous quality standards at every stage of our product's life cycle. Canon's innovative and efficient production methods and environmental commitment make the company a leading global manufacturer.

Pamela looks forward to celebrating her 15th anniversary at Canon, Virginia, in May. She has served in many capacities throughout the years, but the one that provides the most reward is the one she assumes now. She is a Strategic Business Partner and a Change Agent in the organization.

She leads a team that designs, facilitates, implements, and supports programs and processes that add value and serve to transform and strengthen Canon Virginia's foundation through performance-driven organizational development programs.

Pamela has managed Canon Virginia's Tool and Die Apprenticeship Program since 2014.

Pamela serves on Canon Virginia's Inclusion and Diversity Council, where her motto is…." you have to be uncomfortable with being comfortable:" then and only then does that set the stage for change to take place. Pamela is actively involved in Canon's two Business Resource Groups, Women in Leadership Levels (WiLL) and the African American Alliance BRG.

An Army veteran, Pamela received her MBA in Human Resources from Strayer University (2007) and BSGA in Governmental Administration from Christopher Newport University (2000). Pamela maintains two professional certifications, the Professional Human Resources certification (PHR®) and the Society of Human Resource Management Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) certification.

As a dedicated corporate citizen and community partner, Pamela chairs the Build Hampton Roads Business Council and is a Newport News Public Schools Career & Technical Education Advisory Council member. Pamela is a certified member of the Virginia Values Veterans Program and has served as a mentor for Christopher Newport University's Luter School of Business Executive Mentorship program.

She is committed to developing and directing activities to achieve and exceed the overarching goals of Canon Virginia, a top-class company. She promotes, embodies, and upholds Canon's core values of integrity, fairness, communication, and mutual respect. Canon Virginia's corporate philosophy is "Kyosei," which means working together for the common good of all. Pamela's mission as a change agent is to foster and sustain a culture of belonging at Canon Virginia, where members can thrive, innovate, and bring their best selves to the table. And more importantly, championing a workplace where employees (members) feel heard, seen, and valued.



The Honorable Phillip D. Jones
Mayor
City of Newport News

Phillip D. Jones is the 27th Mayor of Newport News, Virginia. In this role, he strives to improve education, invest in public safety, and modernize City Hall. On January 10, 2023, Mayor Jones took the oath of office as the city's youngest-elected mayor.

Over the last decade, Mayor Jones has served in leadership roles in the public and private sectors. As a Marine Corps infantry officer, he led his Marines to support peacekeeping and security cooperation missions on multiple continents. As a management consultant with a leading global firm, he advised Fortune 500 companies, municipalities, and nonprofits on strategy, marketing, organization, and operations across all industries.

In the wake of 9/11, Mayor Jones accepted a nomination to the United States Naval Academy, where he graduated with merit with a Bachelor of Science in History. He completed his graduate course of studies at the Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School, where he served as a Tillman Scholar and Co-President of the Veterans Club. He holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and a Master of Public Policy (MPP).

Mayor Jones' vision is for Newport News to become an All-American City, focused on leveraging public-private partnerships, modernizing City Hall processes, and elevating the Newport News narrative on a national level.



Christopher D. Lloyd
Senior Vice President & Director, Infrastructure & Economic Development
McGuireWoods Consulting, LLC
VEDA Public Policy Chair

Chris Lloyd leads the McGuireWoods Consulting infrastructure and economic development team where he specializes in site selection and economic development incentives negotiations. Since 1998, Chris has worked on dozens of high profile, corporate expansions and relocations across the country. Chris has also worked closely with clients on numerous public-private partnership projects for transportation and other infrastructure and played a leading role in the development and passage of Virginia's public-private partnership laws, which have since become model legislation for use in other states.

Prior to joining McGuireWoods Consulting, Chris served for nearly five years in the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade under Virginia Governors Allen and Wilder. In this position, he was responsible for legislative, budgetary, and regulatory coordination and development within that Secretariat which managed the state's economic development programs.

Chris graduated from the College of William & Mary in 1993. He lives in Richmond with his wife, Megan, and children.



Robert T. Bohannon
Director of Government Affairs
Hunton Andrews Kurth
VEDA Legislative Liaison

Robb has more than 10 years of experience representing companies and trade associations in the health care, entertainment, and high-tech industries in federal and state politics.

Throughout his career, Robb has worked on legislative and regulatory matters across the country related to health and wellness, economic development, First Amendment protections, e-commerce, retail and privacy. He has substantial experience working with governors and state attorneys general offices, building consensus on political and legislative issues, as well as securing support for amicus briefs.

Robb supports clients on a variety of measures including drafting legislation, testifying before legislative committees and subcommittees, lobbying state and federal legislators, developing, and implementing legislative strategies, developing and administering clients' political action committees, and developing and implementing grassroots and grasstops strategies on local, state and national levels.



Elizabeth Rafferty
Director of Government Affairs
Hunton Andrews Kurth
VEDA Legislative Liaison

Elizabeth's practice focuses on government affairs; legislative, budgetary and regulatory strategy; and economic development efforts on behalf of businesses, government, and other clients.

She has represented companies and associations in the technology, housing and transportation sectors. She has experience in a number of the major public policy developments including gaming and cannabis and has more than 10 years of experience in the executive branch of state government. Elizabeth's success has been because of her trusted and respected relationships in state government including several Governor's administrations, agency heads, key staff, and interest groups. She has strong connections with legislators across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Elizabeth provides insight and understanding into the workings of state legislatures and agencies, including political insight and grassroots and grasstops advocacy support. She works to identify the best approach to address distinct issues and a resulting strategy which enables her to invest in the growth and success of her clients.

Prior to joining Hunton Andrews Kurth, Elizabeth served in various roles, including as director of government relations where she assisted businesses, associations, and individuals before Virginia's legislative and executive branches of government. Elizabeth is also the former policy and legislative director at the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), where she was responsible for oversight of the agency's policy initiatives and legislative functions. Elizabeth helped launch GO Virginia, an economic development program designed to grow and diversify the Commonwealth's economy. While at DHCD, she worked as an advisor for community development for the Secretary of Commerce and Trade in the Governor's administration.

Elizabeth is the founder of River City Stars, the only non-profit cheerleading program for athletes with special needs in Central Virginia.



Jason El Koubi
President & CEO
Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Jason El Koubi is President and CEO of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership.

Before joining VEDP in July 2017 as Executive Vice President, El Koubi was previously President and CEO of One Acadiana, a regional economic development organization based in Lafayette, Louisiana. Under his leadership, the organization developed and successfully launched one of the most successful capital campaigns of its kind in the nation to deliver a new economic development program for the nine-parish region. Previously, El Koubi served as Assistant Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development, where he led initiatives that helped secure projects creating more than 63,000 new jobs along with more than $28 billion in new capital investment, while dramatically improving Louisiana's position in virtually every state business climate ranking.
Education

Jason holds a B.S. in Biological Engineering from Louisiana State University and a M.S., Public Policy from the London School of Economics.



David Long, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Organizational Behavior
Raymond A. Mason School of Business
William and Mary

David M. Long received his Ph.D. in organizational behavior from the University of Florida's Warrington College of Business Administration. He holds a BS in business administration from Presbyterian College, and an MBA from the University of Florida.

David's research examines various work-related topics including leader influence and reputation management. His work has appeared in several journals and books, including the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*, *Organizational Psychology Review*, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, and *The Nature of Leadership*.

David's teaching and consulting focuses on introducing and demonstrating methods and strategies for improving one's career and one's organization. He has been recognized by *Poets & Quants* as one of the Top 40 undergraduate business professors. He is also the recipient of numerous undergraduate- and graduate-level teaching awards, including the Faculty Excellence Award, the Page Teaching Award, and the Alumni Fellowship Award.

Prior to earning his Ph.D., David served in the US Navy as a naval flight officer and worked at The Home Depot in business development and store management. He currently serves in the US Navy Reserves, most recently as a mission commander and flight instructor. His areas of interest/expertise include Impression Management, Influence Tactics, Organizational Justice, and Leadership.



Nicole Talton
Economic Development Coordinator
Isle of White County Economic Development
VEDA Salary Survey Chair

Nicole Talton is a born and bred North Carolina Tarheel, graduating from UNC Chapel Hill with a BA in Public Policy Analysis.

She joined Isle of Wight County, VA Economic Development in 2019 with a primary focus in Business Retention & Expansion. Nicole loves assisting micro, small and home-based businesses. She refers to herself as a "recovering banker" of 20 plus years, in 3 different states including small community banks to large national banks, with experience in retail and commercial small business lending.

Nicole is a current board member of Community Knights; an advisory board member for Luter YMCA Smithfield; a very active member of the Newport News chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; and a trustee at Bethel African Methodist Church in Hampton. She is also a charter member of the Kiwanis Club of City Center; former board member of Mary Immaculate Foundation and the Housing Development Corporation of Hampton Roads.

Nicole is married to Newport News native, Ty Talton and they have three sons. She is an enthusiastic and passionate individual who wants to use her God-given talents to serve others.



Crystal Morphis, CEcD
Founder and CEO
Creative Economic Development Consulting

Crystal Morphis is Creative EDC's bright idea generator. She started the firm in 2012 and built it to become the "go-to" economic development consulting firm. The entrepreneurial firm has launched four proprietary programs and has a unique commitment to pay-it-forward through several nonprofit initiatives.

Crystal's experience is as a practitioner and consultant. She has expertise in strategic planning, product development, organizational development, economic impact studies, existing business retention and expansion programs, and site selection. Crystal has consulted across the Southeast U.S. with companies and EDOs. The majority of Creative EDC's clients are repeat customers, a testament to the firm's quality of work and customer service.

Examples of the firm's entrepreneurial culture can be found in its four proprietary programs. In 2013, Creative EDC launched a web-based site assessment tool, www.CreativeSiteAssessment.com. It helps economic developers assess potential business development sites through an independent ranking and prioritization system. In 2015, the firm purchased and re-launched the nationally recognized Certified Entrepreneurial Community® program from AdvantgeWest. In 2017, we launched the Certified Industrial Buildings Program. The first back office for economic developers, C-BOSS was launched in 2018.

Crystal was a managing partner in Sanford Holshouser Economic Development Consulting for 10 years. While with Sanford Holshouser, she was involved in the firm's economic development and site location consulting practice. Prior to joining Sanford Holshouser, Crystal served as the president, and previously vice president, of Surry County Economic Development Partnership, NC.

Crystal earned a Bachelor of Arts, with a major in economics, from Salem College and a Master of Science, major in economics, from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In 2005, Crystal earned the designation of Certified Economic Developer (CEcD). Crystal is a regular instructor at the IEDC-accredited Basic Economic Development Courses at UNC-Chapel Hill and Georgia Tech. She has been a North Carolina licensed broker since 2000 and an LEED Green Associate since 2013. Crystal has authored articles for IEDC's Economic Development Journal and Community Development and is a sought-after speaker on a wide range of economic development topics.