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Sarah Davasher-Wisdom tapped to lead Greater Louisville Inc. as first female president

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Sarah Davasher-Wisdom (Photo: Courtesy of Greater Louisville Inc.)

Greater Louisville Inc.'s (<https://www.greaterlouisville.com/>) Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff Sarah Davasher-Wisdom has been nominated to succeed president and chief executive Kent Oyler.

The appointment to the top job at the metro's chamber of commerce is subject to board approval at the annual meeting Jan. 23, according to a Monday afternoon announcement. She succeeds Kent Oyler, who is expected to stay on during the transition after Davasher-Wisdom takes over following the board's annual meeting Jan. 23.

Oyler said that it's time now to focus on other business interests.

"We are pleased to have a well-qualified and fully prepared internal candidate. The decision we've made for Sarah to succeed Kent as president and CEO received the unanimous support of GLI's executive committee," Mike Ash, GLI's board chairman said.

"We are especially proud that Sarah will be the first female president or CEO in the 157-year history of GLI and its predecessor organizations," Ash said.

"Sarah has proven herself as she has steadily advanced through our organization and she is now well prepared to assume the reins at GLI. She brings a passion for our regional business community and strong experience in chamber management and public policy," Oyler said in the statement.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed my tenure with GLI and the many relationships I've built with people who truly care about Greater Louisville. GLI is in excellent condition and it's now time for me to return my attention to my other ongoing entrepreneurial, business and civic interests."

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Davasher-Wisdom joined GLI in 2014 after working as manager of government relations at the Tennessee Valley Authority. She also served as a strategic communications officer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and community development coordinator under former U.S. Rep. Ron Lewis, a Republican who represented Kentucky's 2nd District.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science and government and a master's of public administration from Western Kentucky University. She is expected to graduate from the U.S. Chamber Foundation's Institute for Organizational Management in January 2020.

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"I'm honored, humbled, and excited to be chosen" to lead GLI, said Davasher-Wisdom, who is 36. "I look forward to working with the board, investors and staff as we continue driving progress in our region and delivering positive results for business. I love this community and I believe we have tremendous momentum to make it even better."

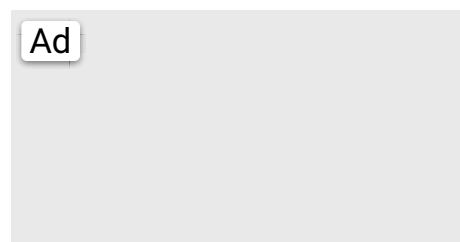
Oyler, 61, joined GLI in 2014 after Mayor Greg Fischer ended a nearly \$1 million contract with the group for economic development services. Several executives were pushed out.

Oyler was tasked with refocusing the organization to improve workforce development, business retention and the region's business friendly environment. GLI won the American Chamber of Commerce Executives 2019 large Chamber of The Year — a big honor in the chamber industry.

"I want to sincerely thank Kent for leaving his private sector businesses and stepping up to lead GLI when it needed the entrepreneurial, financial and relationship skills he brought to the table, and then twice agreeing to extend his contract," said incoming GLI board chairman Lonnie Bellar.

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