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Posted July 24, 2015 - 5:05am

## Leadership Fort Smith Class Of 2016 Announced

Leadership Fort Smith class members Trace Andres, from left, Tommy Bishop, Michael Borrows, Dr. Deborah Braboy and Jenna Clemons

[SEEN ON SCENE: Photo Gallery From Leadership Fort Smith Gathering At MovieLounge](#)

### SPECIAL TO THE TIMES RECORD

The 25 citizens who will make up the 2016 class of Leadership Fort Smith were announced for the first time during a class reception Thursday night at the MovieLounge.

In an effort to put a new twist on this event, the 25 participants were not publicly announced beforehand. These 25 community leaders are set to begin their journey through the Leadership Fort Smith program on Aug. 13 at the orientation session and leadership workshop.

The participants were selected based on leadership or potential leadership



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ability and commitment to the community, along with several other factors. An effort is made each year to build a diverse, well-rounded class representative of the Fort Smith region. This year is no exception, as the class represents a wide variety of backgrounds, experiences and professions.

Leadership Fort Smith is a 10-month program that offers participants a backstage pass to the Fort Smith region. The class will focus on the strengths, challenges, needs and overall community issues that our participants can directly address. Sessions will cover diverse topics such as education, health care, history, crime, local government and education. In addition, participants will learn about economic development and will have the opportunity to see, hear and meet the catalysts for growth in our region.

Leadership Fort Smith is a professional development opportunity that benefits the participant, employers and the community.

The goal of Leadership Fort Smith is evident from the tag line on its logo — Learn, Connect and Lead. The program gives participants the opportunity to learn the ins and outs of our community, connect to community leaders and organizations and then use that knowledge to lead. Leadership Fort Smith is more than an accomplishment to put on a resume — it is a call to action.

The program began in 1986, graduating its inaugural class in 1987, under then-Westark Community College, now the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, which led the program for 28 years. In a collaborative effort between the university and the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce, the decision was made to transfer ownership of the program to the chamber in June.

The Class of 2016:

**Trace Andres** is vice president of commercial lending at Arvest in Fort Smith. Andres graduated from University of Arkansas at Fayetteville with bachelor's degrees in business and marketing. He serves as treasurer for the Southside Rotary Club and is a board member with the Fort Smith Museum of History.

**Tommy Bishop** is a battalion chief and fire marshal with the Fort Smith Fire Department with more than 30 years of experience. In addition, he works with the Firefighter's Association to help disadvantaged youth and works the "Fill the Boot" campaigns for MDA and the "Guns and Hoses" Blood Drive.

**Michael Borrows** is executive vice president and chief financial officer at USA Truck in Van Buren. He holds a finance degree from Liberty University and a master's degree in business administration from DePaul Kellstadt School of Business in Chicago. Borrows served on the national board of directors of the Financial Executives International organization and as finance committee chairman of the Fort Worth Night Shelter.

**Dr. Deborah Braboy** is a licensed professional counselor with Fresh Roots Counseling in Fort Smith. She holds degrees from California State University, Fullerton, Regent University in Virginia and Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Okla. She is an adjunct professor for John Brown University and Liberty University.

**Jenna Clemons** is the director of finance for the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care. Clemons is a graduate of Southern Arkansas University with a bachelor's degree in business administration and is very involved with Grand Avenue Baptist Church, where she has served on multiple committees for service to the community.

**Samantha Cole** is the director of community health and access for Mercy-Fort Smith. She is a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and received her master's in business administration from John Brown University. Cole is a member of the Fort Smith Trails & Greenways Committee and president of the St. Boniface PTO and serves on the Survivor's Challenge and Single Parent Scholarship Fund boards.

**Melissa Curry** is the director of special events for the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce. She serves on the board of the Fort Smith Noon Exchange Club and the Senior Care Alliance. She is a certified dementia practitioner and a certified assisted living administrator. Curry also serves on the planning committees for both Wine & Roses and Teal Night in Tahiti.

**Kelly Davis** is the supervisor of payroll and employee benefits with the Fort Smith Public School District. She received her master's degree in business administration from Webster University and was elected to the Board of the Arkansas Teachers Retirement System. She is president of the local chapter of the T.T.T. Society.

**Jennifer Dreisbach** is marketing and specialty leasing manager for Central Mall, owned by Jones, Lang and LaSalle. She graduated cum laude from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville with a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science. Dreisbach is a member of the Junior League of Fort Smith and on the "Power of the Purse" planning board with the United Way.



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**Cassie Elwonger** is a real estate agent with Weichert Realtors-King Realty Group. She served as the vice president of the Ballman Elementary School PTA and is a graduate of the Citizens Police Academy. She was recognized as the "2013 Realtor Rookie of the Year" by the Fort Smith Board of Realtors and is a member of the Board of Business by Referral.

**Jennifer Foughty** is the office manager for Fort Smith EMS, where she volunteers as a Partner in Education and mentor with Fairview Elementary School. She served as the mission coordinator for Concord Baptist Church and volunteers in the pantry each month at the Alma Community Outreach Center.

**Matthew Garner** is an internal auditor for Baldor Electric Co. He received his master's degree in business administration from Webster University and holds two bachelor's degrees from UAFS. Garner serves as treasurer for the Baldor United Way team and volunteers as a Partner in Education with Beard Elementary School. He is an Eagle Scout and served on the Fort Smith Water Commission.

**Stephen Gebhart** is vice president of operations for Mercy Clinic-Fort Smith. He holds a master's degree in business administration from Webster University and a master's degree from St. Louis University. He served on the board and as president of the board for the Medical Group Management Association of Missouri. Gebhart is an Eagle Scout and served as a Cub Scout pack leader.

**Theresa Hayward** is marketing coordinator for HSA Engineering Consulting Services Inc. She is a board member of Western Arkansas Ballet and volunteers at Christ the King Elementary School. Theresa holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from UA.

**Lori Hopkins** is director of sales/use tax for Golden Living. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from ASU and a master's degree in business administration from John Brown University. She volunteered for the Toys for Tots drive, Relay for Life and United Way Day of Caring. Hopkins graduated from the FBI Citizens Academy in Fort Smith and served on the Board of 360 Leadership Series.

**Christy Koprovic** is vice president of sales and marketing for KMF Inc. She volunteered with the Southside band, St. Boniface Church and Trinity Junior High. She holds a bachelor's degree in English and secondary education from Hendrix College and a master's degree in education from the University of Phoenix.

**Moises Ledezma** is chief operating officer at Business Insurance Consultants Inc. He currently serves on the Child Enrichment Center Board at First United Methodist Church and a board member with Young Insurance Professionals of Arkansas. Moises holds a bachelor of science degree in construction science from Texas A&M.

**Jeremy May** is lead marketing analyst for U-Pack/ArcBest Corp. He received his bachelor's degree in marketing from UAFS and serves on the UAFS Alumni Board. He also participates in the "Mentor Connections" program at UAFS and is a pen pal with students at Trusty Elementary School.

**Allison Montiel** is CEO of La Casa de Montiel. She is a registered nurse and previously worked at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Arkansas Children's Hospital. She holds a master's degree in education from the University of St. Thomas in Houston and a bachelor's degree from George Mason University. Montiel also served with Teach for America in Houston. She volunteers with the PTO at Immaculate Conception Elementary School.

**Greg Pair** is a deacon and director of lay ministries at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. He served as an officer with the Knights of Columbus and on the board of Heart to Heart Pregnancy Center, where he served as president. He also serves on the Old Fort Homeless Coalition and volunteers with the Women's Shelter.

**Bryan Peters** is a chief master sergeant with the 188th Wing, serving as the force support squadron superintendent. He received his bachelor's degree from Arkansas Tech University in history and political science. Peters also volunteers as a softball coach with the South Sebastian Youth Organization.

**Kaylee Rainwater** is a loan officer with BancorpSouth. She holds a bachelor's degree from UCA and a master's degree in business administration from Webster University. Rainwater has been involved with Habitat for Humanity, A21 (Abolishing Injustice in the 21st Century), the United Way and Partners in Education.

**Lorie Robertson** is director of marketing for the Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority. She is one of the founders of the Komen Ozark Paint the Park Pink event. Robertson serves on the Fort Smith Parks & Recreation Commission, the 188th Community Council and the I-49 International Coalition.

**Julie Strickland** is a community service representative with Home Instead Senior Care. She holds a bachelor's degree from Baylor University. Strickland serves on the board of the River Valley Pregnancy Help Center and the Senior Care Alliance. She also participates with the Fort Smith Chorale and the Alma Women's Civic League.

**Scott Zuerker** is a partner with Ledbetter, Cogbill, Arnold & Harrison Law Firm. He has a bachelor's degree from Metropolitan State College and a juris doctorate from UA. Zuerker is the chair of the Board of Governors of the Arkansas Bar Association and served as president of the Sebastian County Bar Association.

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