



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BELTON CREATES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, ADDS EKEY TO LEAD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Belton, MO – As part of an ongoing effort to best meet the needs of this growing community, the City of Belton announced Monday the creation of the Community Development Department. Formerly the Community Planning and Building Department, the Community Development Department will continue to include city planning, building inspections, zoning maintenance and regulation, and enforcement of city property codes. The department will also be responsible for the pending rental registration and inspection program that will be launched in July of 2024.

“Community Development is about more than just managing land use development and the Unified Development Code,” City Manager Joe Warren said. “We want to use our resources and staff expertise to improve our community through collective action and come up with solutions that are meaningful to the people of Belton.”

Matt Wright will continue to be the department director under its new name. Along with the new department name, the Code Enforcement Division will be renamed Neighborhood Improvement. Although still tasked with enforcing city property codes, Neighborhood Improvement will also be responsible for identifying resources for and assisting residents who need assistance with property maintenance and improvement expenses.

To lead the rebranding efforts, the City is proud to announce the appointment of Mike Ekey as Assistant City Manager of Economic Development and Community Engagement, a move that Warren says will bring fresh insights and expertise to the municipality. With more than a decade in public service, Ekey’s addition marks a boost to Belton’s leadership team and underscores the Mayor and City Council’s focus on development and growth.

As part of this appointment, Ekey will work directly with Wright and his team, bringing the arms of economic development and community development together. Ekey will also oversee the development of formal communications and marketing efforts as the City works to improve public outreach and transparency. He will work alongside existing Assistant City Manager of Public Works and Employee Engagement Greg Rokos, as the City continues to strengthen its executive team.

By prioritizing these critical needs, the City of Belton aims to foster improved citizen engagement and services overall. This streamlined structure reflects the city’s dedication to efficiently meeting the evolving needs of its residents.



“Transparency is a priority for the city council, and it is one of my guiding principles,” Warren said. “The only way we will build trust with our residents is not just to open our operations and decision-making processes to the public, but to also invite the members of our community to participate in creating the city we all want.”

Ekey shares his enthusiasm for his new role, stating, “I am thrilled to be back in Cass County and serving a community that is focused on its bright future and the residents who call Belton home.”

Ekey served most recently as City Administrator of the City of Blue Springs. Prior to that, Ekey was the assistant city manager for the City of Raymore from 2019-2022 and led communications for that city from 2015-2018.

Ekey has a Master of Public Administration degree from Park University and spent time in marketing, communications, and journalism earlier in his professional career.

The City of Belton's appointment of Ekey and its targeted restructuring efforts signify a pivotal phase in improving governance, transparency, and community engagement. With a focus on innovation and excellence, Belton is poised for a bright future.

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