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COUNTY CLERK

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Phil LeVota
Jackson County Executive

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 25-29

TO: MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE
CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE

FROM: PHIL LEVOTA
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DATE: NOVEMBER 19, 2025

RE: APPOINTMENT-CHIEF OF STAFF

I hereby appoint Theresa A. Garza to serve as Chief of Staff, effective October 14, 2025. Ms. Garza's resume is attached.

11-19-25
Date



Phil LeVota
County Executive

THERESA A. GARZA

Raytown, Missouri • Wireless: (816) 365-6174 • Email: tgarzaruiz@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY: Highly motivated and dedicated community leader with over 20+ years of solid leadership, policy development, community engagement, and financial oversight experience. Insightful and diversity savvy manager who has a superior communication ability and talent to unite people for a common cause. Uniquely innovative and dedicated goal achiever who can lead a team on a regional level to achieve positive change and set benchmarks in a productive and timely manner for overall success.

MAJOR AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Leadership and Advocacy: Visionary leader who is capable of working on a local, state, and federal level in a highly diligent and professional manner with expertise in legislative and confidential affairs.

Communication Skills: Expert in communicating with general public, customers, professionals, and political leaders.

Financial Oversight and Resource Development: Diligent financial professional who is experienced in planning, executing, and refining 4 billion dollar budgets. Superior skills in fundraising, corporate sponsorships and increasing membership for revenue generation.

Positive Change Agent: Persuasive and unifying attitude that is capable of enhancing the lives of others in a positive and uplifting way for progressive change.

Governance and Policy Development: Experienced County Legislator/Commissioner and Political Director who is capable of leading an organization in a highly proficient and fiscally responsible manner.

SPECIAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adaptability• Leadership• Presentation Skills• Collaboration• Troubleshooting• Strategic Agility• Community Relations• Messaging and Branding• Fast Paced Environment• Policy/Procedure• Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written Skills• Public Relations Savvy• Budgeting• Networking• Employee Relations• Fiscal Management• Customer Service• Fund Raising• Vision and Purpose• Confidence• Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible• Innovative Thinker• Labor Relations• Verbal Communication• Diligent• Goal Oriented• Critical Thinking• Personable• Trustworthy• Humor• Business Acumen
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EXPERIENCE Spire Inc., Kansas City, Missouri

Regional Manager, Governmental Affairs, March 2022 to Present

The Regional Manager of Government Affairs will interact with local, state, and federal legislative bodies and government agencies to represent and protect the organizations business plans and interests.

- Researches and monitors government activities that could affect the organizations business and clients
- Assists and provides input to senior management and leadership on strategic planning for known and potential regulatory activities and implements said strategies related to the business, industry, and community specific issues of interest

- Builds and maintains strong, professional relationships with legislators, authorities, and heads of government entities and agencies and conducts advocacy efforts for government relations at state and local levels of government
- Collaborates in the development of public policies and programs to help local communities
- Manages public relations and builds areas of common interest in support of formal legislation with key stakeholders
- Establishes rapport and joins industry associations and trade organizations to ensure representation of company's interests and when appropriate, seeks leadership roles.
- Collaborates with the company to understand overall goals and objectives to ensure that government relations activities are aligned and identifies risk to the company and/or industry from government actions
- Complies with all laws, regulations, and ethical concerns within government relations activities and broadly across the company
- Speaks at external and internal meetings regarding public policy issues and activities
- Performs other duties as required.

Manager, Economic Development, March 2018 to October 2022

The Economic Development Manager supports and implements the company's targeted Economic Development goals by building effective stakeholder engagement strategies with state, regional and local economic development organizations (EDO's) within the Spire MO West service footprint.

- Develops and maintains strategic relationships with key state and local economic development stakeholders to promote company service areas and offerings to industry prospects. Work collaboratively with company personnel and departments that are critical to designing, installing, and maintaining facilities that serve commercial/industrial customers
- Works with EDO partners to promote the company's service area as an attractive location for new business expansion through targeted business recruitment missions and attendance at significant national meetings and conferences
- Responsible for the Company's written response to business customers and economic development organizations request for energy incentives for economic development via Economic Development Rider, Commercial Industrial Service Rider and Special Contracts. Prepares rate calculations and annual bill estimates
- Consult with appropriate business units on prospective projects to identify potential transmission, distribution, or gas pipeline infrastructure enhancements to meet customer energy needs
- Serves as a lead representative and initial point of contact for economic development prospects and coordinates the company response for specific site selection inquiries
- Attends meetings with external stakeholders and when appropriate coordinated with internal business partners and leadership to determine best course of action related to relocation and/or expansion of new businesses into company's service territory
- Serves as a company expert on best practices, partnerships, strategies, and opportunities to implement the economic development business plan and company's overall approach
- Coordinating the transfer of the information, agreement terms, and documents to the appropriate Business Development Representative for establishment of service once project is announced
- Responsible for maintaining Salesforce database to track project activities
- Performs other duties as assigned

Renovate America, Kansas City, Missouri

Market Development Officer, October 2016 to March 2018

- Responsible for managing the onboarding, providing support and ongoing engagement of local communities and elected officials across the State of Missouri

- Assisted in growing market share by 52% across the state and strengthening existing government relations with community members
- Improved and enhanced non-government stakeholder relations and community awareness by 85% in the KC metro area
- Collaborated and executed company's communications plan and public affairs strategy
- Assisted in developing and utilizing a database for Missouri via salesforce
- Informed and educated member communities, community partners, and vested stakeholders with ongoing updates, visits and upcoming opportunities or changes

Jackson County, Missouri

County Legislature/Commissioner, January 2003 to January 2015

- Oversaw a budget of \$320,000,000 dollars, 22 departments, 1600 staff members
- Cultivated a healthy work culture with particular focus on shared leadership, cross-organizational collaboration, inclusion, accountability, and data-informed decision making
- Secured Jackson County funding for the ArtsKC Council's Regional Cultural Plan
- Spearheaded efforts to create a Women and Minority Owned Business Enterprise Policy for Jackson County
- Championed a charter change on ethics reform that was passed by the residents of Jackson County in a ballot election
- Served as the Finance and Audit, Justice and Law and Health and Environment Committee Chair
- Active participant as a member of the Public Works, Land Use, and Anti- Drug Committee
- Researched, planned, and communicated vital civic issues to various stakeholders in a highly professional manner by being highly attentive to their needs and concerns

Laborers Local Union #264, Kansas City, Missouri Political

Director, March 2012 to February 2015

- Directed local civic engagement field program, including qualification of ballot initiatives, candidate endorsements, voter registration, voter persuasion, and GOTV
- Managed large-scale membership-based field infrastructure to achieve civic engagement goals during election season at the local and state level, including specific signature counts, voter registrations, and direct voter contacts in targeted communities
- Developed and maintained coalitions, partnerships, and key stakeholder relationships to achieve coordinated civic engagement outcomes and campaign benchmarks

American Cancer Society, Kansas City, Missouri

Regional Governmental Relations Director, November 2006 to March 2012

- Served as a primary lobbyist for increasing positive relationship with local governments for on-going projects and created dynamic partnership opportunities
- Managed grants in a highly fiscally and responsible manner with leadership team
- Represented the American Cancer Society at public events, political forums, and government meetings
- Advocated on behalf of agency throughout the year and served on public advocacy committees
- Created strong and strategic campaigns for media, grassroots community, and leadership for key public policy priorities

EDUCATION

Park University, Parkville, Missouri, 2014

University of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri, 2004

Del Mar College, Corpus Christi, Texas, 1999

Master's Degree in Public Administration

Bachelor's Degree of Arts in Criminal Justice

Associates in Arts Degree, Criminal Justice

MILITARY

United States Navy, 1989 to 1994 - Honorable Discharge

CERTIFICATIONS

Auburn University GEDI, Intensive Economic Development Certification
OU Economic Development Institute, Certified Economic Developer
Homeland Security Incident Command System (ICS-402) Certification
Kellogg School of Management for Public Finance Management Certification
NALEO Educational Fund Building Healthy Communities Policy Institute Certification Yale
University Women's Leadership Certification

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Greater Kansas City Hispanic Chamber Nuestra Latina Awardee
Urban Land Institute REDI Program Graduate
Kansas City Business Journal Women Who Mean Business Honoree
Missouri Chamber Leadership Missouri Graduate
Greater Kansas City Chamber Centurions Leadership Graduate
Ingram Magazine's 40 Under 40 Class of Greater Kansas City Leadership
Hispanic Women's Leadership Council Emerging Leaders Awardee
Park University Dean's List
University of Missouri – Kansas City Dean's List
United States Navy Good Conduct Award
United States Navy Eight Letter of Recommendation

BOARDS/VOLUNTEER WORK

Jacob and Ella Loose Foundation, Chair
Greater Kansas City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Board
Greater Kansas City Chamber Foundation Board
Spire's Social Responsibility Committee – MO West
Utility Economic Development Association Board
Park University Civic Leadership Council
Kansas City Latino Arts Foundation
Greater Kansas City Chamber Legislative Committee
Lee's Summit Chamber Legislative Committee
Raytown Chamber Legislative Committee
Independence Chamber Legislative Committee
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) – Lifetime Member