

Gov. Perry Announces Key Staff Changes

Names Walt chief of staff, Taylor head of economic development

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Gov. Rick Perry has named Kathy Walt as chief of staff and Jonathan Taylor as director of the Economic Development and Tourism Division (EDT). Aaron Demerson will serve as senior advisor for economic development.

"Kathy is a long-time trusted adviser and her continued service will be invaluable as she returns home to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Governor's Office," Gov. Perry said. "Our division of economic development and tourism plays a critical role in the economic strength of our state, and with Jonathan Taylor at the helm and Aaron Demerson as senior advisor, we will continue to improve our state by attracting world-class companies to Texas."

Walt most recently served as executive manager for governmental affairs at the Lower Colorado River Authority. She previously served as deputy chief of staff, senior advisor and press secretary for the Office of the Governor. Prior to that, Walt was a reporter for various newspapers in Texas, Ohio and Virginia, including the Houston Chronicle. She also taught communications and journalism at Virginia Commonwealth University, The Ohio State University and Sam Houston State University. She holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in journalism from The Ohio State University.

Taylor, who has been with the state for over 10 years, most recently served as director of the Enterprise Project Management Office at the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. Prior to that, he served as the director of the Texas Emerging Tech Fund and previously served in the United States Army Reserve as a Staff Sergeant Combat Medic and Combat Advisor. Taylor holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Texas Christian University.

Demerson has been with EDT since the Texas Department of Economic Development merged with the Governor's Office in 2003. He previously served as manager of the Texas Tomorrow Fund for the Comptroller of Public Accounts and as manager of credit administration at the Texas Department of Commerce. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University-Kingsville with a bachelor's degree in finance.