

Finalists for economic development consortium head reported

By Lydia Statz, Union staff writer | Posted: Friday, January 24, 2014 12:30 pm

JEFFERSON — The field of applicants to fill the vacant seat overseeing the Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium has been narrowed to three finalists, the county announced Friday.

The trio seeking to lead the county's economic development group include Genevieve Borich, current CEO of SnapSense in Chicago; Joseph Graves, director of economic development for the City of Union, Mo., and Joyce McArdle, president of Piqued Interest Consulting in Brookfield.

Borich, who has a doctorate in urban and regional planning from the University of Illinois, previously worked as the executive director of the Rockford Region Economic Development District. In 2011, she founded SnapSense, a company that helps communities measure and track data to be more effective.

Graves holds a degree in geography from Murray State University, and previously served as executive director of the Carroll County Development Corporation and the senior industrial site representative for the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development.

McArdle, who currently works as an independent economic development consultant under the name Piqued Interest Consulting, is the former Wauwatosa Economic Development Consortium executive director. Prior to that, she worked as an economic development specialist for the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

The JCEDC has been without a director since the resignation of Dennis Heling at the end of August. Heling, who joined the JCEDC upon its creation in 2003, moved to Shawano County to serve as chief economic development officer of Shawano County Economic Progress Inc.

The consortium began recruiting to fill the position in August and selected two final candidates for interviews in October. However, both of the committee's final choices withdrew their names from consideration for the position before Jefferson County Administrator Ben Wehmeier could make a selection, effectively ending the process.

The position was reposted on Nov. 6, and applications were accepted through Dec. 2. The selection committee then restarted the initial application review phase and followed a similar process, including a written questionnaire and two rounds of interviews.

Terri Palm-Kostroski, the county's human resources director, said candidates who applied for the position during the first round of recruitment were notified in November that the committee would reconsider their application if they were still interested in the position. Some of those candidates were reconsidered, and 49 new applications were received. All of the three finalists were new applicants.

Of those candidates, 18 were asked to fill out a written questionnaire as the first round of screening, and seven were invited for the first round of interviews.

The three final candidates will interview on Tuesday, Jan. 28, after which a full background check will be completed and Wehmeier will make the final selection. The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors will need to approve any final appointment.

The JCEDC consists of 10 voting members, including representatives from each city or village and three county board supervisors. The executive director serves to provide professional guidance to the organization's policies, create promote partnerships throughout the region and administer grant and loan programs to promote new and expanding businesses.