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County looks north for 1st development chief

Winston-Salem's John Allen to start Sept. 24 and oversee grants to lure businesses here.

By April Bethea
abethea@charlotteobserver.com
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Mecklenburg County has tapped a Winston-Salem administrator for its newly created economic development director post.

John Allen has served as Winston-Salem's development director since 2007, and has worked in the city's economic development office for about eight years. He'll assume the Mecklenburg job Sept. 24, and will be paid \$96,000.

In his new post, Allen will oversee the county's business investment grant program for businesses that are expanding in the area, said Mark Hahn, real estate services director. Allen also will handle the business development grants, which help pay for infrastructure, parking or other needs for new projects.

County General Manager Bobbie Shields previously worked on the grant programs, along with other duties. The new post will allow Allen to work full-time on the programs, Hahn said.

Allen is expected to work frequently with Tom Flynn, who serves as economic development director for the city of Charlotte because the grant programs are a joint city-county effort.

On Thursday, Allen listed the revitalization of downtown Winston-Salem as a project he is proud off, as well as the decision by Dell Computers to build a large manufacturing center in the area.



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