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## **Lehigh County to vote on new economic development director**

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At its first meeting in October, Lehigh County Board of Commissioners will vote on the approval of Frank Kane, the county's chief of staff, as the new director of community and economic development for Lehigh County. Kane currently serves as the county's chief of staff. County Executive Matt Croslis is expected to nominate Kane.

Cindy McDonnell Feinberg resigned from her post last week after serving as director for eight years. The longest a person can serve in the role is eight years.

As the county's director, she played a major role in helping close deals for numerous big-name companies looking to land properties in Lehigh and Northampton counties, including the West Hills Business Center in Weisenberg Township and the Ocean Spray manufacturing site in Breinigsville.

In this role, she worked closely with former County Executive Don Cunningham, the Governor's Action Team, and Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. to help encourage corporations to move here and also seal the deals and secure financing.

Throughout her career at the county, she worked with numerous economic development partners to encourage community and business growth. She managed programs fostering regional cooperation with the county's 25 local municipalities and provided links between regional, state and federal governments, nonprofits and local businesses.

"I've stayed through the budget hearing," McDonnell Feinberg told Lehigh Valley Business. "I wanted to make sure all programs will have funding through 2014."

While she said she will miss being in that role, she said there always is a time when boards need new perspectives and fresh ideas. She will remain on the governing board of the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority until the end of the year.

Cunningham, president and CEO of Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp., said he remembered when McDonnell Feinberg had been a commercial real estate broker in the private industry when he was elected county executive in 2005.

When Cunningham assumed his new role in 2006, he said, he wanted a community and economic development director who had experience in the private sector and hired McDonnell Feinberg for the job.

Since that time, she played a vital role in helping to secure deals for large companies who were locating major operations in Lehigh County, including Boston Beer Co., Bimbo Bakery, Olympus, Avantor Performance Materials, Coca Cola Park, the Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley and many more, Cunningham said.

“It’s a litany of blockbuster projects,” Cunningham said. “They don’t happen by accident. That’s a list of companies that really could have gone anywhere. She did a fabulous job, from my perspective.”

Many of these major companies moved to Lehigh County during the recession, he noted.

“She made a difference and helped land these projects,” Cunningham said.

Kane also worked on these projects as well, and Cunningham noted that it was often the “three of us.”

If approved by the commissioners, Kane would serve until the end of the year, when a new director would be named, according to Cunningham. The new person could be Kane, he noted.

“Frank has worked as chief of staff for six years,” Cunningham said. “He knows what needs to be done to advance job creation. To me, there’s not much that’s more important than job creation and business growth.”

When companies are looking to relocate major corporations, they want to know that they can rely on a government that’s going to work with them to make it easier for them to do business, Cunningham said.