

Downtown Ventura group hires a new guiding force

By From staff reports

Posted July 28, 2010 at 10:43 p.m.

A nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the business district in downtown Ventura announced this week that it has hired a new executive director.

Kathleen Eriksen comes to the job after more than 13 years as the downtown development director for Battle Creek, Mich., said Dave Armstrong, chairman of the board for Downtown Ventura Partners.

"Kathleen has the hand-on experience we need in this difficult economy," Armstrong said. "She's started businesses and had to make a payroll. She's developed housing and multiplied downtown budgets through successful grant writing."

Downtown Ventura Partners is responsible for managing the downtown Ventura business improvement district. Property owners in downtown pay a fee to fund the Downtown Ventura Partners.

Armstrong said Eriksen was instrumental in developing downtown housing in Battle Creek. She won numerous awards and grants, he said.

Before working in Battle Creek, Eriksen served as the executive director of the Downtown Development Authority in Jackson, Mich. While in Jackson, Eriksen also owned and operated three restaurants for more than 10 years.

That background gives Eriksen a unique perspective on the challenges independent business owners face, Armstrong said.

Eriksen said Ventura is a city that values its arts and cultural community, aesthetics, healthy lifestyles and green living.

"I'm thrilled to be involved in such exciting work, and look forward to continuing the momentum created by Downtown Ventura Partners and the city of Ventura," Eriksen

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