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## **East Kentucky Native and Veteran Economic Developer Hired As New SKED Executive Director**

SOMERSET, Ky. – One of East Kentucky’s most successful economic development professionals will now lead Southeast Kentucky’s premier regional economic development organization.

East Kentucky native Brett Traver has been hired as Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation’s (SKED) new executive director. He will begin work July 1.

His experience in the economic development field, both statewide and on the local level, has prepared him for this new regional role, according to the SKED Board of Directors. As executive director, Traver will spearhead the marketing and industrial recruitment activities in SKED’s 45-county service area, manage a \$10 million loan portfolio, oversee the training of entrepreneurs and small business owners, and provide economic and community development assistance to local communities in Southeast Kentucky.

Traver brings more than a decade of experience as a senior project manager with the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development to SKED.

He’s spent that last two and one half years working for the Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council where he supervised the marketing of the John Will Stacy MMRC Regional Business Park and the Morehead-Rowan County Aviation Business Park.

During that time, the Floyd County native worked to secure a \$7.2 million investment by American Stave Corporation in Rowan County. This project is expected to add 70 new jobs to Morehead’s workforce in the coming months.

Traver was also instrumental in helping Rowan County become a Work Ready Community. A Kentucky Work Ready Community certification is a measure of the county's workforce quality. It demonstrates a community's commitment to producing a skilled workforce

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to business and industry looking to locate in Kentucky. Rowan is one of only 10 of the state's 120 counties to reach the benchmark to date.

He worked with SKED in 2012 to develop and construct a \$1.5 million speculative building in Morehead. The building was funded, in part, through SKED's Industrial Building Loan Fund and is designed to give business owners looking for manufacturing or warehouse space in the Rowan County area readily available square footage.

Traver says the idea of leading SKED means much to him as an economic developer but even more as an East Kentucky native.

"It is an exciting opportunity for me to lead SKED," he said. "The organization has done a lot of good work over its more than 28 years, and I look forward to building on the work that has been done. With a great staff and board, we will continue to be a partner to help our service territory grow and prosper."

SKED Board Chairman Tim Barnes has headed up the search for the new executive director for more than six months, following the retirement of longtime SKED Director Greg Jones. He says he's excited that Traver has accepted the position.

"Our search committee has worked for months to locate the right person to lead SKED and continue its success in the region," Barnes said. "Brett is the man for the job. I have no doubt that his proven experience in the field, combined with his love for all of Southeast Kentucky, will give our organization a powerful new weapon to kick start all of the programs we have in place to address our mission of job creation and create even more for years to come."

Traver is a graduate of Morehead State University. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications and a Masters in Business. He served six years in the U.S. Army.

He and his wife, Angela, have an eight-year-old daughter, Josie.

SKED is a non-profit economic development organization and has been designated a Certified Development Corporation (CDC) by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The organization was formed 28 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky.

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Its corporate office is based in Somerset, with satellite locations in Morehead and Whitesburg to serve its 45-county service region. A staff of nine professionals works with business owners, small and large, to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs, and provide them the technical assistance and training the need to succeed.

For more information about SKED, visit our website: [www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com).