



Connecting Columbus to the World



Experience Seville: A Delegation Led by Commissioner O'Grady Columbus Delegation Biographies



John O'Grady
County Commissioner, Franklin County
Delegation Lead

Since first elected Franklin County Commissioner in November 2008, John O'Grady has assumed leadership roles in economic development initiatives that attract and retain businesses, improve neighborhoods and encourage tourism. He sees a strong local food system, robust public-private partnerships and a long-term planning perspective as key to these efforts, and he has focused on projects that advance these goals throughout his tenure on the Board. John is also active at the state and national level, serving in appointed leadership positions in both the County Commissioners' Association of Ohio as well as the National Association of Counties.

Prior to serving as Commissioner, John worked as an administrator in the State of Ohio Treasurer's office, owned his own business, and served two four-year terms as the Clerk of Courts for the Franklin County Common Pleas Courts and the 10th District Court of Appeals.



Sameen Dadfar
Program Manager, Greater Columbus Sister Cities International

Prior to coming to GCSCI, Dadfar was a Program Manager for the Ohio Development Services Agency. She managed the Ohio Export Internship Program which provided export training to highly motivated undergrad students before matching them with Ohio companies for export-focused internships. Dadfar also worked in Washington, D.C. at the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), where she administered training programs for hundreds of international journalists. Dadfar holds a dual bachelor's degree in International Studies and French from Bowling Green State University. She has traveled to over 30 countries and speaks Farsi and French.

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Julie Fox

Associate Professor; Associate Chair, Department of Extension; OSU Extension Urban Metro Program Leader and Central Regional Director

As an Associate Professor with the Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, Julie serves as the Urban Metro Program Leader, Central Region Director, and Associate Chair for the Department of Extension. Working with OSU since 1998, she holds a Ph.D. in Human and Community Resource Development and a MBA in Global Management. Her background includes working in Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe. Prior to working with OSU, she served as the executive director for an international trade association and a marketing manager for a worldwide nonprofit organization.



Shannon Hardin,

Council President, Columbus City Council

Council President Hardin believes that investing in our transportation infrastructure helps resident's access jobs, education, and healthcare. Council President Hardin fought for Columbus to win the Smart Cities Challenge. With the \$140 million grant, the Department of Public Service and Transportation is working with partners around Columbus to improve our transportation system by implementing smart technology on our public transportation lines, increasing electric car utilization, testing autonomous vehicles at Easton, and much more.

Whatever this new technology brings, Council President Hardin will continue to push for a transportation system that works for all of us. He collaborated with Mayor Ginther to create the Office of Diversity

and Inclusion to more effectively assist minority and women-owned businesses.

Understanding the racial disparities that impact communities of color every day, Council President Hardin worked with former Mayor Coleman to create Columbus's My Brother's Keeper initiative. My Brother's Keeper, housed in the Department of Neighborhoods, aims to reduce the opportunity gaps for young men of color through city-wide goals, service provider coordination, and collective action.



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Emmett Kelly,
Member, Frost Brown Todd LLC

Emmett M. Kelly is a Member in the Columbus, Ohio office of Frost Brown Todd LLC. He practices in the area of public and private project finance. He serves as bond counsel, structuring counsel, underwriter's counsel, developer's counsel and purchaser's counsel for various taxable and tax-exempt project and revenue bond financings, including private activity bonds, municipal, education, health care, renewable and alternative energy, and traditional general obligation, P.A.C.E, P3, P2 and 501 (c)(3) financings.



Mark Patton
Vice President, Smart Columbus

Mark Patton is a new Vice President at the Partnership, focusing on the Smart Cities initiative. Prior to joining the Partnership, Mark was the President of FactGem, a data analytics platform for customer intelligence. Mark is a native of the West Coast and moved to Ohio 5 years ago to help establish JobsOhio, where he was the Senior Managing Director, focused on several key industries including: information technology, consumer products, headquarters and logistics. Patton also managed JobsOhio's outbound sales organization, for both domestic and international sectors and served on the Boards of Columbus 2020 and REDI Cincinnati.

Earlier, Patton held senior roles in both sales and marketing organizations with corporations, including Procter & Gamble, Apple Computer and Eastman Kodak. Prior to moving to Ohio, Mark spent the previous 15 years leading technology start-up companies in Silicon Valley.

Mark received his bachelor's degree from the University of Washington and completed a marketing management program at Stanford University.



Lauren Rummel
Policy Director, Franklin County, Office of Commissioner John O'Grady

Lauren Rummel currently serves as Policy Director for Franklin County Commissioner John O'Grady. Prior to this role, Lauren worked as a Business Analyst for Rosetta, an interactive marketing agency based in Cleveland, OH and then as the Deputy Director of Policy for the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services. Lauren holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from Miami University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from The Ohio State University John Glenn College of Public Affairs.



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**Jim Russell, Executive Vice-President
The Pizzuti Companies**

Jim joined Pizzuti in 1997 with nearly a decade of experience working in the public sector in both economic development and city management. He is a graduate of The Ohio State University and the Economic Development Institute of the University of Oklahoma. But he is a Buckeye not a Sooner! In his tenure at Pizzuti Jim has held a variety of positions and was instrumental in the 2005 establishment of Pizzuti Solutions, the firm's public/private development and consulting division. Pizzuti Solutions focuses on providing management and development services for large-scale public projects such as a new Jail and Forensic

Science Center for Franklin County Columbus, Ohio; a \$50mm Performing Arts Center in Naples, Florida; and a New City Hall project in West Lafayette, Indiana. In his role as Executive Vice President of The Pizzuti Companies, Jim provides management support for the firm's real estate development, consulting and construction activities at its headquarters in Columbus, Ohio and regional offices in Orlando, Florida and Chicago, Illinois. Jim was awarded the designation as a Certified Economic Developer in 1996 by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and is also a faculty member at The Ohio State University.



**Jean Carter Ryan
President, Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority
Board Chair, Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA)**

Jean Carter Ryan joined the Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority in January of 2007 as its first employee. Prior to joining the Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority, Ms. Ryan served as the Deputy Director of the Economic Development Division within the Ohio Department of Development for over 11 years. The Economic Development Division had a budget of \$275 million and a loan/bond portfolio of \$500 million. Under Ms. Ryan's leadership, one accomplishment was the enhancement of Ohio Enterprise Bond Fund's rating from A- to AA-. She has a B.A. in American Studies from Smith

College, Northampton, MA and a Masters in City and Regional Planning from The Ohio State University.



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Jim Schimmer

Director, Franklin County Department of Economic Development and Planning

Jim Schimmer serves as the Director of Economic Development and Planning for Franklin County, Ohio – the state’s second most populous county and the 33rd largest in the United States. In his role, Mr. Schimmer is responsible for the county’s overall direction in economic development, business recruitment, retention and expansion, planning, zoning, housing and building services. He supervises a staff of 25 with an annual budget of \$19 million. He has held the position since June of 2006.

Schimmer has previously worked as the City of Columbus’ Economic Development Administrator and Downtown Development Manager. He also led the Little Rock Downtown Partnership from 2000-2003 and was involved in the site planning of the William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Archives.

Academically trained as a geographer with degrees from Slippery Rock State University in Pennsylvania and the University of North Dakota, Mr. Schimmer’s career has spanned more than 20 years leading other economic development programs and downtown development projects in Wheeling, West Virginia; the Howard-Paulina District in Chicago; and Appleton, Wisconsin. Mr. Schimmer is a member of Urban Land Institute’s Columbus Board and currently serves as a board member and treasurer of the Central Ohio Community Improvement Corporation— Franklin County’s land bank. Throughout his career, Mr. Schimmer has employed the practice of adaptively reusing existing resources as the basis for sound economic and community development.



Cassy Sleeper

Strategic Marketing Manager, The Bruner Corporation

Born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, USA, Cassy is Ohio proud and grateful to call such a thriving, dynamic city home. She joined the construction industry five years ago and is responsible for all corporate marketing and business development strategy at Bruner Corporation, Central Ohio’s #1 mechanical contracting firm. Cassy’s focus is on relationship collaboration to gain a better understanding of what clients really care about in order to deliver highly successful projects. Her passion for people doesn’t stop there... Cassy is an engaged volunteer in numerous industry and community organizations including A Kid Again and The Builder’s Exchange, two Central Ohio organizations she is extremely passionate

about. She attributes the success and fulfillment she’s been blessed with to the relationships she’s built through these organizations, her genuine interest in people, and her desire to be a part of building a GREAT Columbus. Cassy believes that people are the building blocks of life and with relationships built upon a solid foundation of trust, integrity and respect the world is our oyster.



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Tim Sword

President, Greater Columbus Sister Cities International

Tim Sword is responsible for all areas of operating GCSSI. Tim has more than 18 years of experience working with Ohio and U.S. companies to build their exporting capacity by leveraging federal and state resources. He has organized and participated in more than 33 international trade missions to 22 countries. Most recently, he worked for the State of Ohio as the Global Agriculture Program Manager where he founded the successful and nationally recognized Ohio Export Internship Program (EIP). Tim holds a B.A. in Agriculture Economics and Applied Business from The Ohio State University in addition to being a Certified Global Business Professional accredited by the National Association of Small Business International Trade Educators (NASBITE).

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