

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Westmarc president and CEO leaves for job in Goodyear

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Goodyear has hired Michelle Rider, president and CEO of Westmarc, as the city's new economic development director.

The city will pay Rider, a Goodyear resident, an annual salary of \$122,760. She will begin her new position on Jan. 5. Her resignation from Westmarc is effective Dec. 31.

Westmarc is a public-private partnership of the 15 communities, the business sector and educational community west of Interstate 17. Westmarc's mission is to enhance economic development and promote quality of life in the West Valley.

The city selected Rider from a field of more than 40 candidates and four finalists after a nationwide search.

"She comes to us with nearly 20 years of experience in both the public and private sectors," said City Manager Brian Dalke, who was Goodyear's first economic development director.

"Michelle's expertise, knowledge of the West Valley, and leadership qualities are the perfect complement to our team."

Rider served as Westmarc's president and CEO since July 2011. She also has served as senior vice president of external relations for the Greater Phoenix Economic Council.

"I'm excited for this new opportunity," Rider said. "Through my career at GPEC and Westmarc, I've worked closely with all of the West Valley cities and towns. I understand that the success of Goodyear is contingent on the success of the entire West Valley. Westmarc plays a vital role in regional advancement, and I look forward to continuing to support the organization as a stakeholder and partner from the public sector."

Sharon Grambow, chief operations officer of Sun Health Senior Living and the current chairwoman for Westmarc, said the search for Rider's replacement has begun.

"Our Executive Committee will meet to discuss the CEO search and coordinate the transition," Grambow said. "We hate to lose Michelle. She has developed the organization into a leader for West Valley economic development. She has worked tirelessly to strengthen relationships, grown the organization, and promoted the West Valley. We're sorry to see her go, but we're pleased she's staying in the region and will continue to be a partner."

Individuals interested in applying for the position can send a resumé via e-mail to chairman@westmarc.org.

Rider said Goodyear is a progressive, diverse and growing city.

"This opportunity will let me bring my skills and experience to a community I am familiar with," she said.

Among some of Rider's top priorities as Goodyear economic development director are fostering job creation; leveraging the city's assets such as the Phoenix-Goodyear Airport, Loop 303 and Interstate 10; and enhancing retail and entertainment.

A native of Arizona, Rider graduated from Northern Arizona University with a bachelor's degree in political science. She interned for U.S. Sen. Jon Kyl, and worked at several non-profits in Washington, D.C., including the Cato Institute and Citizens for a Sound Economy. She is the granddaughter of former Arizona governor and U.S. Sen. Paul Jones Fannin.