

2024

# Board Election Slate



## ▶ Elaine Bryant

Elaine Bryant is the Dayton Development Coalition's Executive Vice President of Aerospace and Defense and the Managing Director of JobsOhio's Military Federal Sector. In both roles, Elaine has worked to preserve and protect the federal assets in the Dayton region and statewide since October 2019.

Elaine has over two decades of experience in the U.S. Air Force, finishing her career as deputy chief of the Human Systems Program Office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Elaine is an Air Force Academy graduate with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. She also has a master's degree in aerospace from the University of Maryland and she was an Assistant Professor for Aeronautics at the Air Force Academy. Her experience in the Air Force includes program management and engineering leadership positions at AFRL, HQ AFMC, F-35 JPO, and SAF/AQR. She has served as a Commander at the United States Air Force Academy Cadet Squadron 24 and the National Air and Space Intelligence Center's Foreign Material Exploitation Squadron at Wright-Patt.

At the Dayton Development Coalition, Elaine leads all aerospace and defense initiatives associated with WPAFB, SANGB, and the Dayton VA. Her projects include efforts to attract jobs and capital investment from the DOD and other federal entities, in addition to preserving and protecting the current missions in the 14-county Dayton Region through advocacy and proactive measures. She also directs and executes industry engagements with companies in the state of Ohio and outside the state to determine advantageous partnerships to expand and/or relocate operations to Ohio. In 2020, JobsOhio established a 10th industry sector, Military Federal, to recognize the impact federal installations have on the state and support their growth. Elaine was named Military Federal Sector Managing Director and stood up the new sector's operations.

In addition to her roles at DDC and JobsOhio, Elaine serves on the University of Cincinnati Space Research Institute for Discovery & Exploration Advisory Board, the Ohio Defense Manufacturing Community Leadership Board, and has served on the Ohio Department of Transportation Advisory Board, the Dayton Daily News Community Advisory Board and the Dayton International Airport Corporate Advisory Board. She was selected to serve on the Association of Defense Communities 50th Anniversary Committee.





## ▶ **Tom Ford**

Ford serves as the County Administrator for Grand Forks County. He has served for ten years. Ford is responsible to the Grand Forks County Commission for the daily administration of County affairs, counseling the Commission, and County departments in areas of administration, county internal and external affairs, policy, laws, and procedures.

Ford represents the County with the United States Air Force and North Dakota National Guard, Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (formerly OEA), federal, state, and local elected officials, and UND. Ford also manages, directs, and coordinates programs and activities for governmental relations, to include working with Federal and State legislative and executive officers, officers of local government and community groups. At the State level, Ford manages, directs, coordinates, and communicates the County's legislative priorities/ concerns prior to and during each North Dakota Legislative session. He also oversees and directs' the Grand Sky project on Grand Forks AFB, a 50-year Enhanced Use Lease partnership with the United States Air Force.

Ford serves the community through various other activities such as the Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, Grand Forks Young Professionals Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee, UND's Research Institute for Autonomous Systems' Public Sector Board of Directors, and Governor Burgum's Task Force Military in North Dakota (TFMIND), formerly known as the Council on Military Promotion and Strategic Sustainment.

Ford graduated with a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of North Dakota. He currently resides in Grand Forks, ND with his wife, son, and their two dogs.

## ► Keith Graf



Keith has worked in politics and government since his graduation from Texas Christian University with a Bachelor of Science degree. He managed a grass-roots campaign for a State Senator and later served as the Senator's Administrative Director. He has since held positions that include Regional Director for United States Senator Phil Gramm and Field Director for Texans for Rick Perry. He served as Director of the Office of Aerospace and Aviation & Defense under Governor Perry where he worked with domestic and international aerospace and aviation companies to locate or expand into the state. He led the project to locate SpaceX's launch facility to South Texas.

Keith currently serves in Governor Greg Abbott's Office, as the Executive Director of the Texas Military Preparedness Commission. He works with Texas military installations and local communities to grow missions and add military value. He has overseen the distribution of over \$129 million in state grant funds since 2016 for infrastructure projects directly supporting installations. He also worked with the legislature to pass a law that allows the Texas Department of Transportation to provide work on military installations through the largest statewide Intergovernmental Service Agreement. Keith also led the state effort on landing the headquarters of Army Futures Command.

He was appointed by Governor Perry to serve on the Texas Cyber Security Council. He currently serves on the Texas Homeland Security Council, the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station Advisory Board, Chaired the Lone Star UAS Center of Excellence and Innovation at Texas A&M Corpus Christi, served as Co-Chair of the State Advisors Council under the Association of Defense Communities, and serves as an ex-officio member of the Texas Commanders Council.

Keith is actively involved in many other organizations including Executive Advisory Board of the Capitol Area Boy Scouts of America. Keith is life member of the National Eagle Scout Association, National Guard Association of Texas, Advisory Board member of the State Guard Association of Texas, and a member of the Order of St. John.

Keith lives in Austin with his wife, Linda.



## ▶ **Kimberly Huth**

A 24 year United States Air Force Veteran, Kimberly Huth currently serves as Executive Director of Military Affairs for St. Clair County, Illinois. In her role, Huth is the liaison between all County Departments and all organizations across Scott AFB, specific communities surrounding the base, as well as local, state and national-level legislators. She serves the County Board Chairman in an advisory capacity on legislative issues, public policy, and public support agreements—advocating for, and advancing, issues of mutual concern.

As part of her work in St. Clair County, Huth was selected to lead a working group to study the quality of education and licensure portability for families transitioning to Scott Air Force Base. With her leadership, Scott AFB achieved a “Most Supportive” rating for Licensure Portability, making it one of only ten communities throughout the Air Force to receive this designation. Additionally, she was instrumental in coordinating with Scott AFB leaders in addressing food insecurities, child care, mental health access, and much more.

Additionally, Huth actively lobbied for Defense Community Infrastructure (DCIP) grants, assisting Scott AFB’s attempt to gain access to federal funding for base-associated, local community infrastructure improvements. Her engagement and span of influence helps deliver programs that support over 17,000 servicemen and servicewomen (Active, Reserve, Guard, and DOD Civilians) and advocate for more than 45,000 family members and retirees.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Services from Wayland Baptist University and spends time volunteering at Gateway Pete Guardians and the Airlift/Tanker Association.



## ▶ **Scott Norton**

Scott Norton is the Executive Director/CEO of TexAmericas Center. During his tenure, he has helped develop the property into a first-class industrial park that will provide economic development opportunities for the Texarkana region for decades to come – a purpose that drives him daily.

He diligently worked with the TexAmericas Center Board of Directors and elected officials to move legislation through the state legislature during the 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023 sessions that provides the organization additional authorities that have greatly impacted the property's redevelopment. Scott also worked with congressional staff to seek out census tract and HUBZone designations for the former military property. He is the lead point person for TexAmericas Center on the negotiations between the Army Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) office and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Scott brings with him years of expertise in operations, budgeting, and long-term strategic planning from his previous management and director roles in the HVAC, education (including Texarkana College), and healthcare industries. Additional experience in the agriculture, defense, logistics/operations, and workforce development industries contribute to his respected leadership skills.

He currently serves as the Treasurer of the Board of Directors for the Association of Defense Communities, the Treasurer of the Board of Directors for the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce, the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Ark-Tex Council of Governments, and a Board Member for Red River Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Scott also served three years as an elected member of the Texarkana, TX City Council, was founding President of the Pleasant Grove ISD Education Foundation and has volunteered in the community in several other areas

Scott has a Master of Science in Business Administration from Texas A&M University-Texarkana and a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Texas Tech University. Scott is happily married to his wife, Melody, has a son, Ray, a daughter, Alex, and has three stepchildren, Brooke, Garrett and Abby. In his spare time he enjoys life with his family and playing golf.



## ▶ **Stacey Shepard**

Stacey is the President of Shepard Global Strategies, LLC, a consulting advisory practice which helps corporations and public sector entities address disruptive issues – such as cyber-physical security, climate and utilities resilience, and portfolio optimization – to enable growth, sustainability, and mission continuity. She contributes to solutions that incorporate technology and data analytics to drive decision-making and investments, while simultaneously advancing workforce development to promote upskilled capacities.

With 30 years of experience working in corporate, political, and policy-oriented environments, Stacey brings deep insights into leveraging available funding, regulations, and market trends to drive thoughtful investment in buildings, infrastructure, and the surrounding environment. With two decades at Jacobs, a \$15B professional services corporation, she contributed to growth in a variety of roles, culminating as Corporate Vice President of Growth & Strategy for the Federal & Environmental Solutions sector. She also brings strategic insights from a recent role as CBRE’s Senior Managing Director for Infrastructure, Defense & Public Enterprise, and earlier positions at a defense think tank and legislative experience on Capitol Hill.

Stacey is a certified Project Management Professional, maintaining non-profit support on the Board of Directors for the Association of Defense Communities and National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) DC Chapter, as well as a Board Advisory role for Building Cyber Security (BCS). She holds a Master’s degree in National Security from Georgetown University and is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate from Barrett, the Honors College, at Arizona State University, with a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science/Spanish. Stacey is an advocate for inclusion and diversity, while promoting outreach for STEAM initiatives at all educational levels.



## ▶ **Jerrod Wheeler**

Dr. Jerrod H. Wheeler is Superintendent of Knob Noster Public Schools, the resident public school district of Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. Wheeler is an active leader in various support organizations, including: Whiteman Area Leadership Council, Whiteman Base Community Council, Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, National Association of Federally Impact Schools, Military Impacted Schools Association, and Strategic Deterrent Coalition. Wheeler continues to advocate for unified efforts across multiple organizations to strengthen military-child education, thereby enhancing quality of life and mission readiness. As a result of ongoing efforts, Whiteman AFB ranked number one in quality of education on the recent study and scorecard produced by the Air Force.

Jerrod received his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Louisiana, Monroe, his Master's in Educational Administration from the University of Louisiana, Monroe, and his Bachelor's in Education from Northeast Louisiana University, where he was also a two time National Champion in Collegiate Waterskiing. Dr. Wheeler completed post studies through the Harvard Graduate School of Education Leadership Institute for Superintendents and will complete the National Security Forum Institute through Air University in 2021. Wheeler and his wife, Amie, have been married for 21 years and have two children, Jorgie (13) and Jaxon (11).