

## **Richard K. Blackwell**

Richard K. Blackwell, a native of Greenville, South Carolina, is the Vice President of Development for the Southeast Region of the United States for Agracel, Inc.

His focus is providing development solutions on the industrial real estate front for both clients and communities. His firm, Agracel, is a fully integrated industrial real estate development, investment and management company that primarily focuses on secondary and tertiary markets. The primary focus is developing and/or acquiring manufacturing related facilities with intent of being long-term holders of the asset and have successfully developed over 24 million square feet (sf) of real estate in twenty-two states for clients such as JAC Products in Georgia, ZF, Hengst, Hershey's, Ekornes, SetterStix, Gestamp, Teknoware, Michelin, and Horton.

Before joining Agracel in August 2018, he served as executive director of the Oconee Economic Alliance, the economic development arm of Oconee County (South Carolina), where he led a comprehensive approach to economic growth that led to over 1500 new jobs and over half-a-billion in new taxable capital investment for the community within six years. In addition to that stint, he has held various capacities within politics, government relations and both regional and city economic development since 1998. Richard's public-sector experience provides a unique perspective in assisting private sector clients as they navigate through entitlements, grants/incentives, site selection, and collaborating with community stakeholders.

Blackwell has been recognized for his economic development work as having been a recipient of the Novogradac Journal of Tax Credits Community Development Individual Achievement Award – *"Public Executive of the Year"* and has been named one of *"North America's Top 50 Economic Developers"* by Consultant Connect. In 2022, Richard was appointed by Governor Henry McMaster as the District 3 representative to the South Carolina Jobs-Economic Development Authority Board.

Blackwell earned both a Masters in Public Administration and Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of South Carolina. He has completed the *'Basic Economic Development Course'* through the Georgia Institute of Technology; he earned an Executive Certificate in Non-Profit Management from Duke University; has earned a Certificate in Leadership from Clemson University and is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma (OU EDI). He also is a 2018 graduate of the inaugural class of the Advanced Economic Development Leadership program conducted by Clemson University, University of New Mexico, Texas Christian University, University of Alabama, and the University of Southern Mississippi.

For the last two years, Blackwell has served as a member of the board of directors for the Southern Economic Development Council and as the President of the South Carolina Economic Development Association.

Richard and his wife, Allison, live in Seneca, South Carolina with their eleven-year-old daughter, Ellen. When not working, you can find Richard continuing his eternal but futile quest to break 77 on the local golf courses.