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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## NEWS RELEASE

**Gray/Jones County, GA, Release: January 31, 2020**

The Board of Directors of the Jones County Development Authority is pleased to announce the appointment of Haley Watson as the organization's Executive Director. The Development Authority works on new business recruitment and existing industry expansion and retention in Gray and Jones County. The Authority also works with regional authorities to stimulate growth.

Watson was named to the executive director position last fall and has been meeting with state economic developers in Atlanta, local leaders and developers on strategies to market business development opportunities in Jones County.

"The County has made a substantial investment to attract new industries to Gray and Jones County that will help diversify our tax base," said Greg Mullis, Chairman of the Development Authority of Jones County and VP of Corporate Services at Tri-County EMC.

Watson has been involved with the city and county since 2014, as executive director for Main Street, and added the role as executive director of the Chamber in 2016. She has been assisting the County Development authority since 2016.

"The Development Authority of Jones County board of directors wanted to look within our community first to invest in a local professional to lead our economic development team. Haley has in turn invested in us with her time and working toward becoming a certified economic developer. She is the right person at the right time as we see increasing business interest in the Griswoldville Industrial Park and the county as-a-whole. We look forward to the opportunities ahead," explained Josh Lurie, Development Authority board member and managing editor of Smith Communications.

"Wearing three hats is not always easy, but I would not trade it for anything. Every day is a new adventure and I enjoy being able to help grow the community and create a sense of place for those that live in and visit Jones County," said Watson.

Haley is a lifelong Jones County resident and holds a BA in Information Technology from Middle Georgia State University [previously Macon State College].

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Haley Watkins, Executive Director, Jones County Development Authority