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CITYVIEW'S

BUSINESS JOURNAL



A small business **WELLNESS PROGRAM** that is working

RE/MAX Concepts shows how employers can improve both productivity and the lives of their employees.

By Todd Razor

Wellness programs don't have to be all "one-size-fits-all."

If the head office in Windsor Heights is any indication, the signs at RE/MAX Concepts point to it being a nice place to work. There is plenty of natural light, private offices, accessible conference rooms and cubby holes. New paint and the recent addition of hardwood floors in the elevators and common areas provide a modern feel. Bold motivational prints with messages like, "Work Hard. Be Nice." provide hints into the culture RE/MAX Concepts has built, and strives toward, at its locations as a professional real estate services organization.

Jaimee Moore, director of operations, Bekah Kentfield, director of agent services, and Shane Torres, a principal owner at RE/MAX Concepts (photo submitted)

FEATURE

Limiting turnover and improving job satisfaction

A new industry report draws attention to how employers can improve both work productivity and the lives of their employees.

In recent decades, the popularity of wellness programming has expanded. Particularly in office settings, society has come a long way from the proverbial water cooler next to a coffee pot or break room. In recent years, it has become more common on some sprawling corporate campuses to find bustling employee cafes, on-site cardio centers, even auditorium-style conference centers and gymnasiums amid the rows of offices and workstations.

But what does employee “wellness” have to do with limiting turnover and improving job satisfaction? For smaller businesses, where leaders often wear a lot of hats and spend most of their time making the company run, how can that work?

Businesses like RE/MAX Concepts are proving it is possible through implementing and monitoring what is working day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year.

Respect for employees' work freedom and independence

Shane Torres got into the real estate industry and started with RE/MAX Concepts in 2009. He found success in the field, and, in 2016, the company was acquired with Torres becoming a principal owner alongside business partners Matt Mauro and Ou Meksay.

Their director of operations, Jaimee Moore, had already been on board as an employee for five years when the new owners started. Since then, the company has expanded to 20 locations — up from six when Torres originally started — spanning Iowa, including the Quad Cities area, and part of Illinois, and St. Petersburg, Florida.

The business has 55 full- and part-time people across all locations. Moore has watched it blossom to more than 475 independently licensed real estate agents as well.

The culture at RE/MAX Concepts is centered around respect for employees' work freedom and independence. The company didn't intentionally set out to create a “wellness” program. It just kind of happened that way. Their approach naturally evolved based on situations and the needs of their staff.

The owners and business leaders like Moore keep their ears to the pavement, have a pulse on morale, and connect with their teams daily on what is happening on the ground. It's something the current leadership has encouraged from the start, keeping the team members aligned and knowing they are supported.

Start with communication of benefits

When Torres and team took the reins, one of the first topics that popped up was medical benefits administration. There was no formal program in place, and they soon discovered people on staff with extraordinary needs.

Moore spearheaded taking on the role, and RE/MAX Concepts brought on a partner, facilitating an annual insurance benefits offering. The company started paying a portion of the employees' premiums. Today, managing benefits and niche wellness programming has become a shared responsibility. Moore and Bekah Kentfield, director of agency services, tag team the effort.

Providers are available year-round to speak with employees about insurance planning and help them find information about financial tools for retirement savings. Every year, a licensed professional comes in and provides information on benefits like IRAs, helping some people feel more secure.

A new role

Workplaces play a significant role in people's lives, having an effect physically and mentally. Research shows that the pandemic helped clarify the relationship between work and “well-being.” COVID time sped up a lot of things, including RE/MAX Concept's approach to wellness initiatives.

Like most everyone, they did not anticipate the work-from-home dynamic and other changing norms post-pandemic. The company had already been developing a hybrid model, and that was accelerated out of necessity. It became an option for employees and part of the wellness philosophy that stuck.

For Torres and the team, they found putting power in the hands of their employees, many of whom have families and different lifestyles, is the way to go. The scheme allows people to work from home four days a week with one day in the office on-site. It's empowering, Torres said, because, on days when there is no mandatory, in-person meetings or events, employees can have greater flexibility over their own schedules and lives.

He agrees with a family-first, people-first leadership style. Staff development and hard work will always be important, he says, but not by



Michelle Kelley, director of education, Jaimee Moore, director of operations, and Megan VanArsdale, a RE/MAX Concepts transaction coordinator

sacrificing work-life balance. They want to foster a team atmosphere that provides that leeway without creating a negative impact on the ability to meet business needs.

Getting together

Straight forward social behaviors, like welcoming new team members, sharing meals, or helping one another with tasks, help create less isolation and greater inclusion. RE/MAX Concepts has made a conscious and consistent effort to gather together in person despite the company's growing size and remote work options.

They foster teamwork through regular check-ins, collaborative projects, and even activities such as simply hanging out together playing arcade style video games in the café. They say volunteering creates stronger connections, too.

A staple is the onsite breakfasts hosted regularly for agents, and staff members are always welcomed, too.

There is a series of annual events employees can look forward to or get involved with. “Family day” attendance on the first Thursday of the Iowa State Fair has increased steadily over the past seven years, and “movie day” the first Saturday after Thanksgiving has been going strong for more than a decade.

Every February, staff members and their spouses or significant others are invited to the company dinner and awards party with other appreciation events and holiday parties planned annually. Additionally, Moore notes many staff members communicate daily via chat, email or phone. Monthly all-staff meetings and department meetings help ensure face time isn't neglected.

FEATURE

Building traditions

Torres said he sees many companies struggle when they have given up on these types of in-person interactions and networking events. He stresses the importance of getting together in person and making families feel welcome.

When these types of activities and expectations are set around regular and periodic interactions, it doesn't just make a business stronger, he explains, it reinforces bonds that make people feel good, contributes to their health and personal well-being, strengthens the culture even more, and makes them want to stay.

Torres said they do fun team-building exercises and personality profile workshops, too, which help employees understand their motivations and develop effective communication strategies that contribute to desired business outcomes and stronger retention.

The team has brought in massage chairs for workers, and they encourage physical fitness routines in ways that relate to their employees' personal preferences. Whatever they want to do to keep in shape or prioritize athletics is up to them. With more than a dozen dispersed locations, RE/MAX Concepts generally lets that activity type fall into the category of individuals' goals and how people choose to spend their time away from work.

"We try to get them together as much as possible. And, even with our size, we do a pretty good job," Torres said.

Moore says when connection and trust become part of daily work life, wellness grows naturally across the whole business.

"Seeing them person to person matters," Moore continues. "The balance of the two is why we have had such success."

Meeting peoples' needs

The research suggests employees who are happier in the workplace and feel valued are the ones who tend to perform better and stick around longer. The wellness conversation isn't always easily definable.

On a basic level, the company wants a strong culture where their employees know they are cared for and reminded of the fact they can turn to the company for an assist in challenging times. Owners and managers can set the tone by listening to concerns and demonstrating those values through everyday interactions.

Katie Stewart, an agent services representative, shared how she was supported during a time of transition. She said she likes the work and the people. She also appreciates knowing that her voice carries weight and that the leadership wants to know

her insights.

"I moved back to my home state, and instead of parting ways, Concepts offered a 100% remote position for me," Stewart offered. "I was ecstatic to continue to work for them. One thing I value is the leadership team valuing our wellness."

"My manager will check in to make sure my workload is not too much and ask if I need help with anything, regardless of how busy she is. It doesn't matter how busy the leadership team is, they have a willingness to help and let you know that you are heard."

Wellness concepts

Torres and Moore said, once they become aware of a need, the company wants to be known as an employer that is willing and, when able, ready to respond and help set up support and, in some cases, provide direct assistance.

RE/MAX Concepts has supported people's wellness journeys in ways such as helping employees who were going through difficult pregnancies. They were able to grant extended maternity leave, even prior to giving birth, easing the burden and displaying concern for the safety of mother and child. It additionally eliminated some financial worries.

A former employee faced high-risk medical issues and was turned down multiple times for insurance, and she was able to opt into the company's plan after becoming pregnant. The company soon received letters and emails with thank yous, announcing the birth of a healthy baby.

A while back, Megan VanArsdale, a transaction coordinator, had a sudden health crisis, also meaning she would be absent from the office for a few months. A manager called immediately, assuring the company would do "whatever it takes" to make a difficult situation easier.

"I know me being out of the office for that long made things tough in the office for a few people," VanArsdale said. "I was never treated badly for it, though. I had so much support from everyone at Concepts. That experience made me so grateful for everyone... and something I'll always remember."

Why people quit

The bulk of employees who decide to quit jobs don't cite lack of compensation as the reason.

The Society for Human Resource Management points to 2024 survey data that indicates competitive pay and benefits packages should remain a priority for human resources leaders. However, more than 32% of those departing said toxicity in the workplace



Bekah Kentfield, director of agent services, leads a presentation for real estate agents at RE/MAX Concepts in Windsor Heights as Michelle Kelley, director of education, looks on.

was a driver behind their decision to quit.

The problem with the data is that only a little more than 15% of employers noted it as a factor. Over half who quit noted "personal reasons."

The American Psychological Association's 2024 Work in America survey findings suggest most respondents feel they matter at work. More than 86% of respondents noted they want to know that the work they are involved with is making a positive impact on society. Nine in 10 employees agree they are proud of the work they do.

Torres noted a dedicated nonprofit organization that is 100% independent of his brokerage, was established. Concept Cares Foundation has its own multi-member board "making our local community a better place."

That's an avenue for making people feel good about giving back, too, not to mention an annual Thanksgiving basket fundraiser they do every year.

Torres says it is another piece of a wellness puzzle that has led to worker satisfaction and long-term employee retention.

When people are going in the same direction and are supportive of one another, smaller companies can leverage a more flexible approach, and that is more than OK.

"We don't have a specific program per se," Torres said. "It evolved as situations presented themselves." ■

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SALE DATE: 2025-05-19
SALE PRICE: \$390,000
SELLER: ARMY POST HOLDINGS LLC
BUYER: F5 HOLDINGS AP LLC
ACRES: 0.319
SQUARE FEET: 3,426



1428 E. OVID AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-05-19
SALE PRICE: \$1,095,000
SELLER: EASTGATE HOLDINGS LLC
BUYER: F5 HOLDINGS EG LLC
ACRES: 1.544
SQUARE FEET: 13,000

4830 MAPLE DRIVE, PLEASANT HILL
SALE DATE: 2025-05-19
SALE PRICE: \$865,000
SELLER: PLEASANT HILL HOLDINGS LLC
BUYER: F5 HOLDINGS PH LLC
ACRES: 2.000
SQUARE FEET: 14,751

1076 21ST ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-05-19
SALE PRICE: \$293,500
SELLER: ENA INVESTMENTS LLC
BUYER: GASSETT, BRANDON
ACRES: 0.241
SQUARE FEET: 2,651

175 S. NINTH ST., SUITE 605, WEST DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-05-20
SALE PRICE: \$310,000
SELLER: IRVING LLC
BUYER: CONTE TCV PC
ACRES: 0.044
SQUARE FEET: 1,920

3906 N.E. 126TH AVE., ELKHART
SALE DATE: 2025-05-21
SALE PRICE: \$960,000
SELLER: ELKHART PROPERTIES LC
BUYER: EXPLORE INDUSTRIAL-ELKHART 1 LLC
ACRES: 4.317
SQUARE FEET: 0

3325 GANNETT AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-05-22
SALE PRICE: \$600,000
SELLER: ARMY POST DEVELOPMENT LC
BUYER: KATECHO REAL ESTATE LLC
ACRES: 13.945
SQUARE FEET: 0



801 DEE ST. S.E., BONDURANT
SALE DATE: 2025-05-22
SALE PRICE: \$2,537,100
SELLER: KC DT LLC
BUYER: PHARMCO PROPERTIES TWELVE LLC
ACRES: 1.726
SQUARE FEET: 9,600



1000 73RD ST., SUITE 23, WINDSOR HEIGHTS
SALE DATE: 2025-05-27
SALE PRICE: \$145,900
SELLER: BROOKE FARM LLC
BUYER: DECATUR COUNTY PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 0.138
SQUARE FEET: 1,525

312 FIFTH ST., WEST DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-05-28
SALE PRICE: \$178,000
SELLER: PEC PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: CUTLER PROPERTIES LC
ACRES: 0.166
SQUARE FEET: 5,033



224 FIFTH ST., WEST DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-05-28
SALE PRICE: \$292,000
SELLER: PEC PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: CUTLER PROPERTIES LC
ACRES: 0.127
SQUARE FEET: 8,199

101 BROWN ST., RUNNELLS
SALE DATE: 2025-05-28
SALE PRICE: \$87,000
SELLER: RMK CONTRACTING LLC
BUYER: MORGAN, DONALD
ACRES: 0.190
SQUARE FEET: 3,000



308 FIFTH ST., WEST DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-05-29
SALE PRICE: \$587,000
SELLER: DIGMEUP ENTERPRISES LLC
BUYER: CUTLER DEVELOPMENT LLC
ACRES: 0.166
SQUARE FEET: 2,469

6001 THORNTON AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-05-30
SALE PRICE: \$1,373,664
SELLER: AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT LC
BUYER: NEXT PHASE DEVELOPMENT LLC
ACRES: 9.015
SQUARE FEET: 0

2617 PATRICIA DRIVE, URBANDALE
SALE DATE: 2025-05-30
SALE PRICE: \$700,000
SELLER: URBAN PROPERTY LC
BUYER: J&C VENTURES LLC
ACRES: 0.454
SQUARE FEET: 7,120

1814 S.E. FIRST ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-06-02
SALE PRICE: \$1
SELLER: DONNA JO ANANIA TRUST
BUYER: ANANIA III, MICHAEL J
ACRES: 0.200
SQUARE FEET: 0

820 LYON ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-06-04
SALE PRICE: \$3,755,000
SELLER: LYON ST LLC
BUYER: CAPITAL CITY APARTMENTS LLC
ACRES: 2.286
SQUARE FEET: 43,524

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2025-06-04
SALE PRICE: \$3,737,448
SELLER: BROADLAWNS MEDICAL CENTER
BUYER: K&J PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 8.778
SQUARE FEET: 0

1201 N.E. GATEWAY DRIVE, GRIMES
SALE DATE: 2025-06-05
SALE PRICE: \$530,000
SELLER: DSRK LLC
BUYER: BURK HOLDINGS LLC
ACRES: 1.518
SQUARE FEET: 0

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2025-06-05
SALE PRICE: \$225,000
SELLER: ABE I LLC
BUYER: HOLT SALES & SERVICE LLC
ACRES: 93.045
SQUARE FEET: 0

2601 E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-06-06
SALE PRICE: \$160,000
SELLER: CAMPUSTOWN DENTAL LLC
BUYER: STEPHEN, BRADY
ACRES: 0.177
SQUARE FEET: 1,389



111 11TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-06-06
SALE PRICE: \$835,000
SELLER: WADE INVESTMENTS LLC
BUYER: 111 11TH ST LLC
ACRES: 0.400
SQUARE FEET: 7,920



250 N.W. 43RD PLACE, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-06-10
SALE PRICE: \$120,000
SELLER: ANAGO OIL COMPANY INC
BUYER: 4306 NW 2ND STREET LLC
ACRES: 2.375
SQUARE FEET: 7,325

6655 N.E. 15TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-06-10
SALE PRICE: \$1,250,000
SELLER: DRA PROPERTIES LC
BUYER: CAPCO 6655 DSM LLC
ACRES: 1.071
SQUARE FEET: 10,800

7600 S.W. 22ND ST., SUITE 106, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-06-11
SALE PRICE: \$209,000
SELLER: MOSAIC PROPERTY GROUP LLC
BUYER: GRIFFIN LAND INVESTMENTS LLC
ACRES: 0.110
SQUARE FEET: 1,500



17 MAIN ST., S.E., BONDURANT

SALE DATE: 2025-06-11
SALE PRICE: \$275,000
SELLER: BAD FRIEND LLC
BUYER: BLAHA, KATIE
ACRES: 0.106
SALE DATE: 2,145

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2025-06-11
SALE PRICE: \$523,000
SELLER: GHOLDS LLC
BUYER: ALTOONA PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 3.000
SQUARE FEET: 0

5780 WEST PARKWAY, JOHNSTON
SALE DATE: 2025-06-11
SALE PRICE: \$250,000
SELLER: RAL LC-JOHNSTON SERIES
BUYER: J4 NORTH LLC
ACRES: 1.206
SQUARE FEET: 0



210 COURT AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-06-11
SALE PRICE: \$1,550,000
SELLER: NORRIS PARTNERS LLC
BUYER: 210 COURT AVE LLC
ACRES: 0.067
SQUARE FEET: 5,808

4231 UNIVERSITY AVE., DES MOINES
SALE DATE: 2025-06-11
SALE PRICE: \$300,000
SELLER: FITZGIBBONS HIPPI, JULIA
BUYER: DSM ORTHODONTICS REAL ESTATE LLC
ACRES: 0.209
SQUARE FEET: 2,704

NO ADDRESS LISTED
SALE DATE: 2025-06-12
SALE PRICE: \$390,000
SELLER: UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY
BUYER: FOOD BANK OF IOWA
ACRES: 3.267
SQUARE FEET: 0 ■

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Bare Med Spa	MASON CITY	CERRO GORDO	02	\$500,000	4	17	17	EXISTING	Beauty Salons
Teggatz Enterprises, Inc.	MASON CITY	CERRO GORDO	02	\$150,000	4	5	31	EXISTING	Janitorial Services
twiNz, LLC	WAUKEE	DALLAS	03	\$350,000	4	4	4	NEW	Golf Courses and Country Clubs
Fortis Co LLC	West Des Moines	DALLAS	03	\$680,000	0	14	14	NEW	All Other Personal Services
J&B Properties of Dubuque, LLC	DUBUQUE	DUBUQUE	02	\$1,922,000	7	15	15	NEW	N/A
Pretty Nails and Spa LLC	Iowa City	JOHNSON	01	\$226,000	2	2	2	EXISTING	Nail Salons
D&L Self Storage LLC	Lisbon	LINN	02	\$157,000	2	0	0	NEW	Lessors of Miniwarehouses and Self-Storage Units
Knapp Time Dairy	Larchwood	LYON	04	\$797,000	1	0	1	EXISTING	Dairy Cattle and Milk Production
Knapp Time Dairy	Larchwood	LYON	04	\$506,000	1	0	1	EXISTING	Dairy Cattle and Milk Production
TechniGolf, LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$290,000	1	1	1	NEW	All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries
1:1 Walkthrough, LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$93,000	2	2	2	NEW	Architectural Services
Goldman Properties LLC	Grimes	POLK	03	\$683,000	3	0	6	EXISTING	General Automotive Repair
AAL FITNESS LLC	URBANDALE	POLK	03	\$25,000	0	3	3	EXISTING	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
Cedar Valley Information Technology Service	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$110,000	1	0	4	EXISTING	Other Computer Related Services
Cedar Valley Information Technology Service	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$50,000	1	0	4	EXISTING	Other Computer Related Services
MULTISPECTRAL SYSTEMS LLC	BETTENDORF	SCOTT	01	\$15,000	0	0	1	NEW	N/A
NAIL TEK LLC	DAVENPORT	SCOTT	01	\$50,000	1	0	4	EXISTING	Nail Salons
PACFAB SERVICES LLC	DAVENPORT	SCOTT	01	\$15,000	0	0	2	NEW	All Other Miscellaneous Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
Tees All N LLC	Norwalk	WARREN	01	\$31,500	0	1	1	NEW BUSINESS	Transportation Equipment and Supplies (except Motor Vehicle) Merchant Whole

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ON THE MOVE

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Hansen to lead human resources for Iowa Department of Corrections

The Iowa Department of Corrections announced the promotion of **Dawn Hansen** to the position of human resource director.



Dawn Hansen

Mercy College of Health Sciences appoints Zurface as VP for mission and campus culture

Mercy College of Health Sciences has announced the appointment of **Amanda Zurface**, JCL, as its inaugural vice president for mission and campus culture. Zurface has more than two decades of service and leadership within the Catholic Church. Her career spans diocesan and parish leadership, nonprofit formation and communications. She has served as vice-chancellor of the Diocese of Pueblo, diocesan postulator for the cause of Sister Annella Zervas, OSB, and as the outreach and content specialist for Covenant Eyes. She is also the founder of Joy Seeker, a Catholic nonprofit focused on restorative care and human flourishing.



Amanda Zurface

Mercy College of Health Sciences names Salyers as dean of the Joyce E. Lillis School of Nursing

Mercy College of Health Sciences announced the appointment of **Vincent L. Salyers**, EdD, RN, ANEF, FAAN, FNAP, as the inaugural dean of the Joyce E. Lillis School of Nursing. Dr. Salyers brings more than 30 years of academic and clinical experience to one of Iowa's largest nursing schools.

R&R Realty Group welcomes Less to brokerage team

R&R Realty Group welcomes **Rachel Less** to its brokerage division, R&R Real Estate Advisors (REA), as a commercial real estate representative. Less graduated from Drake University in 2023 with a degree in healthcare administration and public health. She began her career in sales with Konica Minolta, where she gained experience working with customers and developing new business. At R&R Realty Group, Less will work alongside the brokerage team to connect customers with spaces that meet their needs and serve their long-term goals.



Rachel Less

Housing Solutions Alliance announces Romig as director

The Polk County Blueprint for Housing Solutions Alliance (Housing Solutions Alliance) has named **Doug Romig** as director to lead and oversee activation of The Blueprint to Address Homelessness (The Blueprint). The Blueprint is a five-year strategic vision plan that reflects community-defined priorities for improving services and resources within the homelessness response system throughout Polk County. Romig has more than 30 years of experience working in local and regional government. Most recently, Romig was the director of parks, recreation and community programs for Thornton, Colorado. Notably, 25 years of his career was spent with the City of Des Moines, where he served as housing services director.



Doug Romig

Des Moines University appoints Good to board of trustees

Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences has named **Robert Good**, D.O., MACOI, to its board of trustees. A 1977 graduate of DMU's College of Osteopathic Medicine, Good adds decades of experience in internal medicine and a record of leadership in health care and medical education to the board.



Robert Good

"Dr. Good's deep understanding of osteopathic medicine and his passion for developing the next generation of health professionals make him an outstanding addition to our board," Angela L. Walker Franklin, Ph.D., DMU president and CEO says. "As an alumnus and a philanthropic partner, his insight and vision will help guide DMU's continued growth and mission-driven impact."

Iowa Cultural Coalition hires first executive director

Matthew McIver, longtime arts leader and advocate, stepped into the part-time role in August following a competitive hiring process. McIver moved to Iowa in 2008 as part of the team that launched the innovative Des Moines Social Club, a multidisciplinary arts organization that garnered national attention. More recently he served as artistic director of Iowa Stage Theatre Company, an award-winning theater organization in central Iowa, and consults with nonprofits and businesses to strengthen their stories under the banner of McIver Communications.

"The mission of the ICC has never been more important," Lindsay Bauer, president of the ICC Board, said. "Arts and culture are vital attractors of talent to Iowa, and build quality of life, economic investment and stronger communities. But our creative sector has faced unprecedented challenges in recent years, from a difficult recovery from the pandemic to shifting state and federal legislatures that place burdens and hardships on this valuable sector. So at this crucial time the board took the step of hiring our first staff, and we couldn't be more excited to have Matt take this role." ■

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