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## Southwest Michigan First Announces Lee Chatfield as New CEO

**Kalamazoo, Michigan** – Regional economic development catalyst Southwest Michigan First today announced Lee Chatfield, former Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, as the organization's new Chief Executive Officer.

"We are proud to welcome Lee Chatfield to our team as CEO and are excited to work with him to do even more to improve our region and assist companies in creating Michigan jobs," said Southwest Michigan First Chairman Aaron Zeigler. "Southwest Michigan First has had incredible leadership and success over the years, but we are eager to see Lee grow our company and expand our impact and footprint even more. We believe he has the right vision and work ethic to partner with our team to take us to new heights. We couldn't be more excited."

Chatfield was a member of the Michigan House of Representatives for six years and was chosen by his peers to serve in the top two leadership positions for four of those years as Speaker of the House and Speaker Pro-Tem. During his time as Speaker, Chatfield led the charge on several economic development initiatives that led to multiple developments across the state such as the Mithrive program created to support transformational redevelopment projects, as well as paving a path for a new arena in Kalamazoo with support for the Regional Event Center Financing Act. He also partnered closely with the administration to accomplish several major reforms including lowering the cost of car insurance, criminal justice changes including expungement and making available increased funding and assistance for mental health services and education.



Before his election to the state Legislature in 2014, Chatfield served as an athletic director, teacher and coach at Northern Michigan Christian Academy in Burt Lake. He and his wife, Stephanie, have four sons and one daughter.

"I am looking forward to partnering with an amazing organization that's focused on creating more opportunities and good paying jobs in our state and this region in particular," said Chatfield. "There's so much more we can do to grow and assist people in these challenging times. I'm ready to get to work with a very talented team that's already serving on the frontlines and impacting people's lives daily. I can't wait to be in this community with my family and serve alongside this incredible team."

#### **About Southwest Michigan First**

Founded in 1999 on the principle that the greatest force for change is a job, Southwest Michigan First is an organization of privately funded economic development advisors who act as the catalyst for economic growth across the seven counties of Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren in Southwest Michigan. [For more information about Chatfield](#) and Southwest Michigan First, please visit [www.southwestmichiganfirst.com](http://www.southwestmichiganfirst.com).

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