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Chafee retains Stokes as executive director of RIEDC

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According to governor Lincoln Chafee, Keith Stokes, the executive director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corp. (RIEDC), is his choice to continue to lead the state's official economic development organization.

"I believe the EDC must serve as a catalyst to help our private sector lead Rhode Island back to economic prosperity - especially in the preservation and creation of jobs for our citizens," Chafee said. "Keith Stokes shares my vision of encouraging the success of small business while building on Rhode Island's economic assets....from the soon to be developed Station District in Warwick and the Knowledge District in Providence to our defense industry on Aquidneck Island and our impressive tourism industry. I feel confident that Keith recognizes what Rhode Island needs to enter a new era of job creation and economic growth."

"I thank governor Chafee for giving me the opportunity to continue to lead this organization. I look forward to working with Governor Chafee and his team to develop and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy to create sustainable, quality jobs and position Rhode Island for long-term economic growth," Stokes said. "Following Governor Chafee's call to bring people together to meet common challenges, I will continue to engage the business, labor, environmental, scientific and education communities in a common cause to find the right solutions that will move Rhode Island's economy forward."

Stokes has served as executive director of the RIEDC since February 2010. Prior to his appointment, he served as a member of the RIEDC board of directors and was the executive director of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce for over 15 years. Before his success at the Chamber, he worked as senior policy advisor to former Rhode Island Governor Bruce Sundlun, executive director of the Omni Development Corp. and senior policy advisor to the Rhode Island General Treasurer.

Stokes is a native of Newport where he served as a three-term city councilman. He was educated at Cornell University with a Bachelor of Science Degree (Quill & Dagger Honor Society) and the University of Chicago with a Master's Degree. Stokes has a diverse professional background including business, community planning, historic preservation and government. He is also a frequent national, state and local lecturer in community and regional planning, historic preservation and interpretation with an expertise in early African and Jewish American history.

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