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Hendricson of the Town of Enfield

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Name: Courtney Hendricson

Title: Assistant Town Manager, Development Services

Company/firm: Town of Enfield

Years with company/firm: 8 Months

Years in field: 10+

Years in real estate industry: 10+

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Real estate organizations/affiliations: Board member for the CT Economic Development Association, an active member of the CREW Real Estate Exchange and the International Council of Shopping Centers. A sustaining member of the Junior League of Hartford and graduated from Leadership Greater Hartford's "Quest" leadership development program.

How do you contribute to your company and/or the industry?

I believe the key to success is to know your philosophy, your numbers and lead by example. We have over 2,200 businesses in Enfield ranging from Fortune 500 to one-person shops.

The commercial tax base is 33% of the total and residential makes up 67% - that is a STRONG ratio - the more the commercial tax base is, the less it rests on the backs of the residents in the form of property taxes. Our industrial vacancy rate (~6%) is half of the entire Greater Hartford rate (~12%) - that means our industrial businesses are staying put and makes us look all the more attractive to potential businesses. Our class A office vacancy rate is 14.5% compared to the total Greater Hartford's 20%. Again, that shows a strong office clientele and that we are filling the spaces we do have - this tells the broker community that Enfield is a desirable place to be.

Town manager Matt Coppler and I have talked a lot since I started and we share a philosophy around Economic Development - every function we provide and every department we have in town contributes to and affects economic development in Enfield. It is my job to help the entire organization understand this effect and how we can all positively contribute to a healthier commercial tax base by maintaining and improving our high quality of life.

The competitive advantages we have in Enfield include:

- * Superb Highway Access
- * Being located in the heart of the knowledge corridor
- * A strong commercial tax base and mix: Our business community is a strong mix of industrial, retail, professional services, farms, R&D, manufacturing, office and distribution. This means we're not relying on any one industry for success.

- * Our natural resources like the CT River
- * High quality of life
- * We have tax abatements for business expansion and job creation

It really does take all of us to make economic development successful on the local level.

During the last 10 years of your career, which professional accomplishment, honor or achievement has meant the most to you and why?

The single event professionally that impacted my career was during my undergraduate work, I completed an internship at The White House and one with Senator John Kerry from my home state of Massachusetts. Neither of those felt "quite right" so, during graduate school, I interned for a city manager and knew immediately that local government was the branch for me - closer to the people (which can be both daunting and rewarding both)! Also, the recognition that was most meaningful to me was when I received Member of the Year from the CT Economic Development Association. I was pleased that CEDAS recognized my efforts to retain and attract quality business to the Farmington community. As the Economic Development Director, I acted as a liaison between the local business community, the Town government and the Chamber and I understand that we all act as partners to serve our businesses. Today, as Enfield's assistant town manager, development services, I'm excited and pleased to have these experiences so I may continue to connect and grow a strong commercial base, attract notable businesses, and move forward on key development projects for the Town of Enfield.

What advice would you give to women just starting out in commercial real estate?

The advice I would give to women just starting out in commercial real estate would be to stay current on local happenings and available resources for your business community. Seek out a mentor and take advantage of professional development opportunities that emphasize learning and networking. Attend as many events and seminars as possible to continuously educate yourself about new trends and programs that are working in other places. Relationships are key in every aspect of economic development! Get more involved with the local and regional industry associations in economic development and commercial real estate. I joined International Council of Shopping Centers and volunteered to serve on a committee for Connecticut Economic Development Association before being asked to join their board of directors. I have met some great people and learned a lot.

Who or what has been the strongest influence on your career and why?

My first boss in local government became a key mentor for me. I worked for her in 2 different cities in Texas - as she moved up, she lifted me up with her and I will always be grateful to her for those opportunities as well as for her ability to show me a woman in economic development who is sharp, savvy and a successful negotiator as well as a fun colleague and friend. Today, I continue to learn from others each day and believe in paying it forward by seeking opportunities to lift others up and to connect others so we may all grow!