



Jason Cannon Biography

FEATURED PANELIST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION 3: THE ARTS MEANS BUSINESS: CONNECTING THE ARTS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

JUNE 19TH, 2024 @ 10:00AM

Jason Cannon is an experienced and passionate advocate for economic advancement, growth, and development. He currently serves as President of the not-for-profit Wake Forest Business & Industry Partnership. The organization devotes energy to promoting the town of Wake Forest, North Carolina as a destination for business and industry through economic development activities that expand the tax base, increase job opportunities, and foster positive economic impact on the community.

Previously, Jason served as President & CEO of Downtown Greensboro, Inc., as Vice President of Governmental Affairs for The Greensboro Partnership, and as Chief of Staff to a long-serving member of the North Carolina House of Representatives and the House Committee on Finance.

In his present role, Jason dedicates his efforts to collaborating with business, government, and community leaders to advance the Town's economic development priorities through partnerships that are fueling Wake Forest's business and entrepreneurial growth. Examples include:

- In 2019, Jason forged a partnership with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary commencing the planning and development of nearly 200 acres of pristine real estate linking "new" and "old" Wake Forest to serve as the Live-WORK-Play Wake Forest Business & Technology Park. In late 2020, the site became certified under the State of North Carolina's Certified Sites Program, a first in Wake Forest's history.
- Also in 2019, Jason helped pave the way for Baltimore-based Merritt Properties to invest in the now-thriving Capital Business Park, activating nearly 75 acres of vacant land adjacent to the established South Forest Business & Industrial Park to bring over 450,000sf of new office and flex space to the Wake Forest commercial market. The project also advanced highly needed road access improvements for existing businesses in the area.
- In early 2021, Jason successfully recruited business incubator and co-working space, The Loading Dock, to Downtown Wake Forest. Through a \$4.5M restoration of a 24,000sf warehouse bordering the Town's historic core, The Loading Dock Wake Forest formally opened in early 2022. It has seen virtually instant success, now boasting over 300 local members. Based on impact analyses, the facility will bring 437 jobs to Downtown (147 of those newly created) and a \$175M annual recurring economic impact when fully operational. By any measure, it is the largest recruitment in Downtown Wake Forest history and serves as a vital resource to a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Most recently, in June 2022, Jason recruited aviation defense contractor Blue Force Technologies to Wake Forest. Creating 125 jobs with an average salary of over \$82,000 annually plus millions in new capital investment, the company is establishing an integration facility in the development of the unmanned "Fury" aircraft commissioned by the United States Air Force.

Jason holds a Master of Public Administration degree from North Carolina State University (GO PACK!!!) as well as Bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Sociology. In 2013, Jason was selected as one of the "40 Leaders Under 40" by the Triad Business Journal. He is also a graduate of the Leadership Development Program at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), a Fellow of the North Carolina Institute of Political Leadership (NC-IOPL), a graduate of both Leadership Greensboro and Leadership Wake Forest as well as the Public Executive Leadership Academy (PELA) and the Municipal & County Administration (MCA) Program at the UNC School of Government. In May 2018, Jason attained the nationally recognized Certified Public Manager (CPM) accreditation from Arizona State University. In the summer of 2023, he was accredited as a North Carolina Certified Economic Developer (NCCED) through East Carolina University and as a Master Economic Development Practitioner (MEDP) through the Advanced Economic Development Leadership (AEDL) Program.

Jason is incredibly blessed to have his impeccable wife, Marie, of 14 years and, by God's amazing grace, is the exuberant father to four year-old – and absolutely effervescent – Adeline.