

Woodridge chamber head looks to boost membership

By Don Grigas

Staff writer

Kiersten Regelin is the new president and chief executive officer of the Woodridge Area Chamber of Commerce.

Regelin, who for the past 18 months has served as the operations manager for Junior Achievement of Eastern DuPage County, took over June 1, succeeding Edie Bernstein.

Bernstein left the position in April after five years as the organization's first full-time president and CEO.

Regelin has wasted no time meeting many of the 260 members in the chamber, and said her goal is to grow the membership by another 100 members within a year while servicing the needs of both large and small businesses that comprise the chamber.

"There is a wealth of opportunity for the chamber to grow," said Regelin, a graduate of Carroll College in Waukesha, Wis. "The challenge will be in balancing new growth with continuing to provide value-added programs to each of our members, both large and small."

Regelin was recently accepted into the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. She plans to earn a master's degree in business with a focus on corporate social responsibility, nonprofit/public management and strategy.

While with Junior Achievement, Regelin worked in the Woodridge area creating partnerships between corporations and schools to develop unique educational programs designed to build business and life skills in students.

"I was already familiar with the Woodridge business community from my involvement with Junior Achievement," Regelin said.

Two new programs Regelin is preparing to initiate are geared toward promoting business in the Seven Bridges area and in Internationale Centre.

"We recognize that there are specific needs in both areas, and are creating committees to focus on the needs of the Seven Bridges development and in Internationale Centre," Regelin said.

Regelin said the committee will look at promoting one or two special events at the Seven Bridges site within the next year.

One of the services the chamber intends to provide larger businesses in Internationale Centre is a method of listing job openings more economically than other current employment listing services.

"We hope to have that up on our Web site in the next month," Regelin said. "We have not structured the cost yet, but we hope our members can take advantage of our service at a lower cost than normal."

Because the nature of business conducted in Internationale Centre is not retail-driven, programs for that area will focus more on employee programs and community outreach, she said.

Mike Krucek, who headed up the executive search for Bernstein's replacement, said Regelin's educational background "was made for this job."

"Kiersten has enthusiasm, high energy, is very organized, a natural leader, and is a great communicator," Krucek said.

Regelin, 23, is a native of Marengo, Ill, and lives in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood.

She was one of three candidates interviewed for the position, Krucek said.

Regelin is training for an AIDS marathon to take place in Florence, Italy, and raises money for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

She got her first taste of working in the nonprofit sector when she created her own organization to support children's theater in Marengo at the age of 17.

"It was something on a small scale, but I continued my interest and studied nonprofit management," Regelin said.

Don Grigas' e-mail address is:
dgrigas@libertysuburban.com

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