

PEER KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SERIES

MISTY CROSBY

Over a dinner of pizza and wings during a NADO meeting in Washington, DC earlier this year, Misty Crosby shared insights into her career with Buckeye Hills Regional Council and her upcoming retirement.

Misty began working at Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) in 1991 when she was 17 as part of a work-study program with her high school. She went on to earn an associate degree while working part-time as a secretary. A tiny bit of BHRC trivia: Misty was the recipient of the first computer at BHRC!

Misty was promoted to Development Specialist in 1998 and began administering state and federal grants for the Council's members (HUD CDBG, FEMA Hazard Mitigation, Ohio Public Works Commission). Misty reported directly to Development Director Frederick Hindman, who remains a colleague and a long-serving member of the Council's management team.

After another promotion in 2004, to Assistant Executive Director, Misty was responsible for working across departments and overseeing the budget and financial operations of the organization. "I was mentored by Boyer Simcox who was Buckeye Hills' long standing executive director. Boyer provided a lot of support to me and encouraged me to build a professional network and learn from others outside of the Council," said Misty. It was clear that Simcox was prepping her to become executive director upon his retirement. In 2004 she also received a bachelor's degree in organizational management.

Misty was promoted to Executive Director in 2007 and has held this position ever since. She recalled some of the challenges transitioning from being a peer to the boss. According to Misty, it took time to gain the confidence of staff and to continue to build trust and strong relationships with the board and the community. "I had to figure out what I did well and to not try to do everything myself," she shared. She also worked hard to define what the region needs and ensure that BHRC was working to address those needs. She acknowledges these challenges will exist for BHRC's executive directors that come after her.

With support of the BHRC board, Misty announced her plan to retire in July 2022 after 32 years with Buckeye Hills Regional



Buckeye Hills Regional Council

Executive Director, 2007 – 2022
Assistant Director of Finance, 2002
– 2007
Development Specialist, 1998 –
2002
Secretary, 1991 – 1998

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Understand what your region needs and ensure your organization is addressing them
- Executive Directors need to fully understand their organizations finances
- "You can never network enough" - travel to attend conferences, expand their network, and bring back current ideas
- To succeed you must both love the work and be skilled at working with your board, elected officials, and employees
- Figure out what you do well and don't try to do everything yourself



Founded in 1968

Serves Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington counties with a population exceeding 260,000

15 member board of directors

Marietta, OH

KEY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Area Agency on Aging for the eight country region
- Designated Southeast Ohio Aging & Disability Resource Network
- Broadband
- Local workforce development through the Innovation Gateway Network
- Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for businesses in the manufacturing, service, and retail sectors
- Strategic planning and technical assistance for local communities
- Serves as a designated Ohio Regional Transportation Planning Organization

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Council. She began the conversation with the board about her decision to retire in June 2019, leaving them plenty of time to develop a strategic recruitment plan for hiring her replacement. She has also been very candid with BHRC's staff about her retirement plans and has lived up to her assurances to them that she would remain committed to the organization throughout the transition process and until her last day.

Misty shared her belief that to succeed as executive director you must both love the work and be skilled at working with your board, elected officials, and employees. It can be deeply rewarding but also present many challenges. "I am proud of the organization and the work of BHRC staff and hope they can find a replacement who is even better than me," she told us.

The onboarding process has been organized to hopefully allow overlap with the new executive director, which will include meetings with the finance director. "I can't stress enough the importance of the executive director to fully understand the organization's finances: where the money comes from, how it is spent, and how it benefits staff, because the buck really does stop with the executive director," she said.

Misty encourages all new executive directors to travel to attend conferences, expand their network, and bring back current ideas. According to Misty, "you can never network enough." As executive director, Misty made regular trips to the statehouse, and participated actively in the Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC), Southeast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI), the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA), and NADO.

As we concluded our conversation, Misty reflected that "as an executive director, you never know when a new opportunity will arise for the Council and your region, and you need to be networking, making connections, and working to be ready to seize them."