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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

Last week news spread fast about the sudden departure of Andrew Jackson, who had been executive director of the Commission on Economic Inclusion and a senior vice president of the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP), the commission's parent organization.

The announcement came during the commission's annual meeting at the Tudor Arms Hotel inUniversity Circleby GCP president Joe Roman. When Brian E. Hall learned a few weeks ago thatJacksonwould be leaving the Commission on Economic Inclusion June 1, he did what he has been doing for two decades inCleveland. He offered his help as it transitions.

Hall will serve as a part-time interim executive director while the commission develops plans for continued growth. Hall is no stranger to the commission. He served on the advisory board since its inception 11 years ago and served as Co-Chair from 2005 to 2010 and was part of the leadership that recruited and hired Mr. Jackson.

“My objective in offering to serve on an interim and part time basis is to ensure we maintain all areas that are progressing and to work with our team, our corporate members our MBE companies and our stakeholders, to collaborate for even more success,” said Hall.

Hall states that when he learned there would be a void in leadership beginning June 1,” he felt compelled to help keep the leadership focused on the mission on increasing diversity of boards, increasing diversity of senior management, increasing workforce diversity and continuing the progress in supplier diversity and construction”

Over the years Hall has become known for his commitment to growing more successful minority firms. He served was President of the Cleveland Business League in the late ‘80s and served on the board of the Greater Cleveland Roundtable, the Minority Economic Opportunity Center and founded The President s’ Council LLC in 1995.

The Presidents’ Council LLC is made up of several of the region’s largest Black firms and is focused on wealth creation and economic development in the Black community. Through its foundation, (The Presidents Council Foundation)they have successfully graduated 120 Emerging Black firms from the Emerging Entrepreneurs program began in 2000. They recently bestowed their Annual John H. Bustamante Entrepreneurs Award on Ariane Kirkpatrick of AKA Construction. The Presidents’ Council Foundation also has achieved both a 100 percent graduation rate andhad 100 percent of its seniors in the Presidents’ Council Scholars High School Program attending a two or four year Ohio college.

Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge (OH-11) issued the following statement regarding the announcement of the resignation ofJacksonas Executive Director of the Commission on Economic Inclusion and as a senior vice president of GCP, the Commission's parent organization:

“The pre-mature departure of Andrew Jackson from the Commission on Economic Inclusion is a loss to the Greater Cleveland community. Since his arrival at the Commission in 2006, Mr. Jackson has been a positive force for change and development of minority business enterprises that increase the economic vitality and competitiveness of the entire region. In 2011, Mr. Jackson was instrumental in developing the proposal that led the U.S. Department of Commerce to open a Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)BusinessCenterinCleveland. Since its opening in April, 2011, the Center has helped to secure $23 million in contracts and $8 million in financing for its clients," said Congresswoman Fudge.

Mr. Jackson set the bar high for effective leadership and accelerated the growth of minority-owned businesses and the inclusion of minorities in our region's workforce. Congresswoman Fudge urges the Greater Cleveland Partnership to maintain that momentum and understand its importance to the minority community as it pursues a new direction for the Commission.”

In addition to directly helping other Black firms and students the council was an architect of the Minority Business Accelerator 2.5 run by the Commission and part of the collaborative the worked to bring it to life, that included the Commission, Jumpstart, NOMBC and others with the support of the Fund for the Future.

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Hall’s company Innogistics LLC has 120 associates in five states, serving intra plant logistic needs of major companies. “I will continue to run and grow my company, while providing support for the Commission staff. Our company has no major direct business relationships with commission member firms and I will ensure a policy on conflict of interest and transparency is adopted. “I am proud to work with Dr. Deborah Bridwell who has been promoted to Deputy Director, while we transition to the next phase of growth and leadership.” Dr. Bridwell has served the Commission for 11 years, most recently as Senior Director of Inclusion Initiatives.

Jacksonpreviously was a consultant at Accenture, where he focused on transforming large-scale business and technology in the automotive and industrial equipment industries for clients including BP America, DaimlerChrysler, and Johnson Controls.

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