



Michael L. Parson

GOVERNOR
STATE OF MISSOURI

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**Governor Parson Announces Graduation of Missouri Leadership Academy
Inaugural Class, Launch of Second Class**

(JEFFERSON CITY, MO) – Today, Governor Mike Parson announced the graduation of the inaugural class of the Missouri Leadership Academy. The first Leadership Academy class consisted of 23 emerging leaders from across the State of Missouri’s 16 executive departments who were selected to participate in the state’s first-ever, cross-department leadership development program. In addition, Governor Parson announced the second class of the Missouri Leadership Academy.

“Good leaders will help the state government deliver for the citizens of Missouri. That’s why each Missouri Leadership Academy class matters so much: we are helping develop today the next generation of state government leaders,” **Governor Parson** said. “I have been impressed by the first class’ commitment to making themselves better for the people they serve. I’m proud of the first class for completing this demanding program and the second class for stepping forward.”

The Missouri Leadership Academy is an innovative program that brings together emerging leaders to develop new skills and become better leaders. The program’s foundation is that through the commitment to better leadership, the State of Missouri will continue to improve and serve its citizens better.

Since the program launched in July 2018, participants have built their capabilities in three core areas: leading themselves, leading others, and leading change. The Academy partnered with the University of Missouri’s Novak Leadership Institute to implement some elements of the leadership training.

The program also included a focus on learning about how state government works for Missourians. In September 2018, participants met with a variety of state officials — legislative leaders, statewide office holders, members of the judiciary, Cabinet leaders, and reporters who cover the Capitol — to learn the ins and outs of state government and the budget process.

Thanks to partnerships with state departments, participants had multiple opportunities to meet informally with senior leaders across the 16 departments at site visits. They also toured the Jefferson City Correctional Center (Department of Corrections), the Missouri State Highway Patrol Crime Lab (Department of Public Safety), Missouri S&T’s Virtual Surface Mining Simulator (Department of Labor & Industrial Relations), and the Missouri River with Missouri River Relief (Department of Natural Resources).

As the final component of the Leadership Academy, participants completed capstone projects. Participants were divided into teams and asked to develop solutions for important challenges that face the State of Missouri’s workforce. The capstone projects completed by the first class focused on the theme of leadership. Earlier this week, participants presented their capstone project conclusions to Governor Parson and Cabinet leaders.



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“We need to invest in our state government leaders. We need leaders who not only lead their teams, but also work across all of government to find creative solutions for our citizens. That’s what the Missouri Leadership Academy is all about,” said Drew Erdmann, State of Missouri Chief Operating Officer. “Working with the first class drawn from all 16 departments – and seeing firsthand their talent, dedication, and commitment to get better – is inspiring. Every Missourian should be proud of these public servants.”

“It was an honor to be a member of the first class of the Leadership Academy,” said **Tanika Nevills, manager of the Southwest Regional Resource Center in the Department of Social Services**. “This has been an amazing experience, and I look forward to taking the training and skills we developed and implementing them in my offices. I’m even more excited about the direction we are going as an agency and the great things to come for all Missourians and state employees.”

“I am so grateful to have participated in Missouri’s Leadership Academy,” said **Stacey Smith, alternative project delivery coordinator for the St. Louis District of the Department of Transportation**. “This innovative program has given us the tools, experience, and concrete examples to identify how we can be great leaders for Missouri’s citizens and government. I’m thankful that this experience connected me with fellow emerging leaders across state government — a new network of passionate peers. The Leadership Academy molded us into better leaders, and I look forward to continued collaboration with them.”

Governor Parson and First Lady Teresa Parson hosted the first and second classes of the Missouri Leadership Academy for dinner at the Governor’s Mansion Thursday night. The evening included a graduation ceremony for the inaugural class.

Both classes met together for an informal mentoring session Thursday afternoon.

The second Missouri Leadership Academy class includes one to three representatives from each of the 16 Cabinet departments. Slates of candidates were nominated by their department leaders. Each nominee then submitted a resume and a brief memorandum on why they were a good candidate for the program. A committee of Cabinet leaders reviewed the applications and made the final selections.

The State of Missouri will continue to have two classes a year. The next class will be nominated by Cabinet leaders in May 2019 and start in July 2019.

You can find more information about the Missouri Leadership Academy at: leadershipacademy.mo.gov. You can also keep up with the new class on social media by following #MOLeadershipAcademy.

See below for brief biographies of the second class of the Missouri Leadership Academy:



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Melinda Adams

**Lead Unit Supervisor, Division of Probation & Parole
Department of Corrections**

Melinda is the Lead Unit Supervisor at the District 1 satellite office in Maryville, Missouri, which covers the counties of Atchison, Holt, Worth, Gentry, Nodaway, Andrew, and Buchanan. Melinda reviews reports prior to submission to the courts and/or parole board, assists staff in developing case management plans, and oversees the daily operations of the office. She serves on various committees within the department and works closely with the judicial system and local law enforcement. Melinda has been with the department for 21 years and, during her tenure, she has served as an Institutional Parole Officer at Maryville Treatment Center and a Field Probation Officer with District 1.

Amber Addison

**Client Services Manager, Information Technology Services Division
Office of Administration**

As a Client Services Manager, Amber supports the Office of Administration's IT needs. She manages a high-performing team of developers that maintain more than 50 applications utilized by OA and the enterprise. She also manages a team of web developers who maintain over 250 websites. Responsibilities include project oversight, collaboration with all the consolidated agencies, and coming up with IT solutions to make state government run more smoothly. Amber has been with the State for 19 years serving in the IT profession.

Tim Arbeiter

**Director of Broadband Development
Department of Economic Development**

Tim serves as the state's new Director of Broadband Development within the Department of Economic Development. The Departments of Agriculture and Economic Development created the new office to address rural Missouri's broadband needs and work collaboratively with private and public partners to accelerate its deployment. Tim began his work in this unique role in July 2018 and looks forward to utilizing his 15 years in economic and community development to facilitate new broadband solutions for Missouri.

Chris Bramlett

**Budget & Planning Senior Analyst, Division of Budget & Planning
Office of Administration**

Chris is a Senior Budget Analyst for the Office of Administration within the Division of Budget and Planning. In this role, he assists in the development of the Governor's recommended budget; monitors and reviews both appropriation and policy bills throughout the legislative process; researches, analyzes, and develops recommendations regarding current state budget and policy issues; and mentors new analysts in the division. He holds degrees from Missouri University of Science and Technology in civil



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and architectural engineering and a Master of Public Administration from Southeast Missouri State University.

Chris Brewer

Deputy Warden, Western Missouri Correctional Center

Department of Corrections

Chris serves as a Deputy Warden at Western Missouri Correctional Center, a medium custody correctional center, which houses just under 2,000 offenders. His job is to assist in the analyzation, planning, development, and management of institutional operations at the facility. He began his professional career in 1997 as a Corrections Officer and has been promoted through the custody ranks to his current position. He earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Missouri Western State University in 2011 where he graduated with high honors.

Shartina Campbell

Assistant Program Administrator, TA/CC Processing Centers

Department of Social Services

Shartina serves as an Assistant Program Administrator for the Department of Social Services. She works closely with Family Support Division managers providing support, structure, and guidance while taking advantage of each learning opportunity to improve quality and continuous leadership development. Shartina has worked for the department for 12 years, serving previously as an Eligibility Specialist, Eligibility Specialist Supervisor, and Field Operations Manager.

Michelle Creach

Public Information Officer

Department of Revenue

Michelle is the Department of Revenue's public information officer and a manager in the Communications Office. She prepares communications materials for internal and external audiences, develops and executes communication strategies for department projects, responds to media inquiries, and more. She began her career with the State of Missouri in 2013 and previously worked in the Missouri Senate and House of Representatives.

Bianca Farr

Director of Employment Services

Department of Mental Health

Bianca is the Director of Employment Services for the Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health. In this role, she provides oversight to community behavioral health centers engaging in the evidence based practice of Individual Placement and Support. She also manages special projects that promote the importance of supported employment and financial well-being of individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders. Bianca graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in social work.



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Michelle Forneris

Area Engineer

Department of Transportation

Michelle Forneris is the Missouri Department of Transportation's Area Engineer in the City of St. Louis. Michelle serves as MoDOT's local connection within the City of St. Louis community. Michelle works with her team to coordinate MoDOT's planning, design, traffic operations, construction, and maintenance activities in the City of St. Louis. Michelle received her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and is a registered professional engineer in Missouri.

Shawn Gruber

Outreach & Education Chief

Department of Conservation

Shawn serves as an Outreach and Education Chief for the Department of Conservation. In this capacity, he leads a hard-charging team of conservation educators and program coordinators as they deliver exceptional conservation education-related services to schools, citizens, and partners across Missouri. Shawn began his MDC career in 2001 as a Conservation Agent, and subsequently served as a Program Coordinator, a Wildlife Programs Supervisor, and a Regional Supervisor. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology/Wildlife Management and a Master of Business Administration.

Matt Killion

Area Engineer

Department of Transportation

Matt is MoDOT's Area Engineer for Jackson and Cass Counties. As Area Engineer, Matt is responsible for coordinating all MoDOT activities in the area and works closely with cities, counties, and other transportation partners to deliver transportation solutions and improvements. Matt joined the department in 1999, and has held leadership positions in the Traffic, Construction and Materials Divisions.

Alex Kovac

Deputy Regional Director, Missouri State Parks

Department of Natural Resources

Alex is a Deputy Regional Director for Missouri State Parks, and oversees 12 facilities in the southeast portion of the state. Alex joined the Department of Natural Resources in 2004 and has since held various positions within the Division of State Parks, ranging from law enforcement to park operations.

Michael Lanahan

Deputy General Counsel

Department of Economic Development

Michael serves as Acting General Counsel for the Department of Economic Development, where he provides legal and policy guidance for major state economic development programs. Michael has



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devoted significant efforts to help grow the St. Louis region's geospatial technology ecosystem, connecting stakeholders across industry, government, K-12, and higher education. Prior to serving in state government, Michael practiced corporate law (e.g. mergers and acquisitions, venture capital investments) at a global law firm in St. Louis, where he also served as Co-General Counsel for the Ferguson Commission.

Brooke Mayfield

Assistant Director of Investigations

Department of Mental Health

Brooke's responsibilities as the Assistant Director of Investigations include supervising the Eastern Region of the Investigations Unit, providing oversight of daily operations related to investigative processes, and managing the Employee Disqualification Registry for the entire department. Brooke has worked at DMH for over fifteen years in various roles. Brooke holds a PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Missouri – St. Louis.

David Merchant

Senior Bank Examiner, Division of Finance

Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions, & Professional Registration

As a Senior Bank Examiner out of the St. Louis region, David works alongside a team of field examiners to analyze and regulate state-chartered banks. In his role, David regularly oversees the entire examination process of larger, complex, and/or troubled institutions by assigning and reviewing work, writing the final report of examination findings, and addressing the board of directors concerning findings and corrective actions for noncompliance issues. In addition to his field duties, David serves as the central point of contact for the division's CSBS Accreditation process, which requires an in-depth review of internal policies, procedures, and operations to determine if they meet established state agency regulatory industry standards. David holds a BSBA degree in finance from Creighton University and recently graduated *summa cum laude* from the Paul W. Barret Jr. Graduate School of Banking.

Janissa Moore

Unemployment Insurance Auditor

Department of Labor & Industrial Relations

As an Unemployment Insurance Auditor in Kansas City with the Division of Employment Security, Janissa audits and investigates employer financial books and records, collects delinquent taxes, conducts claimant interviews, and reviews division documents to ensure compliance with Employment Security Law. She previously served as Claims Specialist I-II, and volunteered to be a part of the A-Team to assist the Jefferson City Regional Claim Center. Janissa previously served on the board of Dreams to Reality, a non-profit organization in Jefferson City, which assists women of the community in transition.

Melissa Skinner

HIPAA Compliance Officer, Missouri Veterans Commission

Department of Public Safety



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As the HIPAA Compliance Officer, Melissa oversees all ongoing activities related to the development, implementation, and maintenance of privacy and information security for the Veterans Commission in accordance with state and federal requirements. Melissa is responsible for the daily operations of the program, including policy management, monitoring and auditing program compliance, investigating and tracking incidents and breaches, and ensuring veterans' rights are in compliance with state and federal laws. Melissa has worked for the Missouri Veterans Commission for six years, and holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Missouri State University and a Master of Business Administration from William Woods University.

Sara Smith

**Unit Manager, Children's Division
Department of Social Services**

Sara currently serves as the Unit Manager within the Children's Division. Program areas within her Unit include the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline Unit, Child Abuse and Neglect Review Boards, Background Screening Investigative Unit, and the Missouri School Violence Hotline. Sara has served 13 years in support of the Missouri Department of Social Services, working for the Children's Division as Unit Manager, Children's Service Specialist, and Children's Service Worker. Prior to her employment with Children's Division, she worked at Child Safe of Central Missouri, Inc., a child advocacy center that conducts forensic interviews of children who are alleged victims of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, exploitation and other traumatic events that involve a crime. Sara is an alumna of the University of Central Missouri and holds a Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Criminal Behavior.

Stacia Steinman

**Account Manager & Procurement Officer
Department of Public Safety**

Stacia is an Accountant for the Department of Public Safety and serves as Account Manager and Procurement Officer for the Office of the Director. Stacia has served the State of Missouri for over 19 years with experience in the Department of Natural Resources and the Office of the Administration.

Pam Thomas

**Coordinator, First Steps Early Intervention Program
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education**

Pam is the state coordinator of the First Steps program, which provides services to over 15,000 children, birth to age three, who have developmental delays or disabilities. Her professional duties include managing multiple contracts, implementing program requirements, and evaluating improvement activities. She has been with First Steps for 15 years, and the state coordinator for the past 10 years.

John Thomas

**Chief, Office of Human Resources
Department of Health & Senior Services**



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Currently, John serves as the Chief of HR for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Leading a team of 13 HR professionals, the office administers the various personnel functions of employment, and ensures compliance with federal and state personnel laws. Prior to his current role, John served as a Learning and Development Consultant with the University of Missouri System.

Jaron Vail

Research Associate

Department of Higher Education

Jaron is a research associate in the proprietary school certification division within the Department of Higher Education. His primary responsibilities include reviewing and approving new program applications and programmatic changes for state certified institutions. He also manages approximately 300 files for institutions and organizations that have been granted exemption from state certification standards, and serves as the audio technician for the department's coordinating board and other agency initiatives.

David Vandergriff

Deputy Warden of Offender Management, Farmington Correctional Center

Department of Corrections

David is the Deputy Warden of Offender Management at the Farmington Correctional Center. His daily operations include oversight of custody and security measures, and the appropriate classification and assignment of offenders. David has been dedicated to public service for more than 24 years since beginning his career in 1994 as a Corrections Officer I.

Brooklyn Wasser

Revenue Manager, Driver License Bureau

Department of Revenue

Brooklyn is a Revenue Manager in the Driver License Bureau at the Department of Revenue. She transitioned from a Section Supervisor in the Taxation Division to a Revenue Manager in the Driver License Bureau in August 2017. She manages two areas in her current role: the Driver License Public Service Call Center that answers telephone inquiries regarding driver license laws, regulations, and procedures, and the Driver License Record Center that obtains driver record requests from individuals, government agencies, law enforcement, and businesses. She began her career with the Department of Revenue and has been directly supervising and leading staff for over seven years.

Chris Wieberg

Director, Water Protection Program

Department of Natural Resources

Chris was appointed director of the Water Protection Program effective Aug. 1, 2017. In this role, Chris directs the activities of the department's Water Pollution Control Branch, Public Drinking Water Branch, Financial Assistance Center, and also serves as the staff director for the Missouri Clean Water Commission. Chris has worked for the Department of Natural Resources since 2004. Prior to joining the Water Protection Program, he served as a unit chief with the Wellhead Protection Section, and as a Soil

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and Water District Coordinator. Chris holds a degree in Agriculture from Lincoln University. In his free time, Chris enjoys spending time with his family, hunting, fishing, and raising cattle on his family farm in Maries County.

Jimmy Williams
Administrator, Grain Inspection Services
Department of Agriculture

Jimmy serves as the Administrator of Grain Inspection Services for the Department of Agriculture. This program operates three field offices and provides inspection services to grain companies, farmers, and crop insurance companies throughout the state. He began his employment with the Department of Agriculture in 1993, working as a Feed Chemist in the department's Feed Control Laboratory, was later promoted to Program Coordinator of the department's Forest Resources Program, and assumed his current role as Administrator of Grain Inspection in 2010. He earned his Bachelor of Science at Southeast Missouri State University and received his Master in Public Administration from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

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