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BRIDGE Announces Adrian Holt, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer at Eastman, as 2026-27 Board Chair

Kingsport, TN — BRIDGE, a privately funded regional economic development organization, announced a leadership transition. After a highly impactful two-year tenure marked by unprecedented regional collaboration and economic growth, Board Chair Julie Bennett, Executive Vice President and Chief Legal and Governance Officer at Ballad Health, is completing her term as chair but continuing to serve on the BRIDGE Board.

BRIDGE is excited to announce that Adrian Holt, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer at Eastman, will succeed Julie Bennett as the 2026-27 BRIDGE Board Chair.

Under Julie Bennett's leadership, BRIDGE successfully crossed city, county, and state boundary lines to foster regional approach to economic advancement. Her tenure was highlighted by major milestone victories, most notably bringing together public and private stakeholders to invest heavily in expanded regional air service. This historic initiative established a new Air Service Committee (made up of public, private and elected officials), introduced a new carrier and flights aimed at boosting tourism, and generated a compounding economic "snowball effect" across communities.

A primary pillar of Bennett's tenure was the successful rollout of BRIDGE's comprehensive strategic plan, conducted in partnership with economic development research experts Younger Associates. To ensure the plan truly reflected the needs of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, Bennett steered a thorough stakeholder engagement process. This strategic planning process included conducting more than 120 interviews and community outreach meetings. Through this extensive outreach, the process successfully engaged regional participants - including business leaders, higher education, non-profits, municipalities, tourism organizations, chambers of commerce, economic development professionals and community stakeholders.



"Serving as chair of the BRIDGE Board of Directors has been an incredible honor," said Bennett. "Having grown up in this region, I have always believed that we limit our potential when we focus on boundary lines instead of regional opportunities. I am incredibly proud of our incredible staff and board and what we have built together, and I know that BRIDGE is in exceptional hands moving forward."

Adrian Holt, an accomplished leader, is poised to steer the organization into its next phase of innovation and growth. Holt has been a proactive engaged leader during his time on the BRIDGE Board, and he shares the vision established in BRIDGE's strategic plan that he helped develop.

"Julie Bennett's leadership has been nothing short of transformational for BRIDGE," said Adrian Holt, incoming Board Chair. "She has set a stellar benchmark for what regional collaboration can look like. As I step into this role, I am entirely focused on capitalizing on our current momentum, expanding on our current initiatives and forging new partnerships."

The leadership transition officially took effect on July 1st. Holt will chair his first board meeting on July 16th.

About BRIDGE Regional

BRIDGE is a privately funded regional economic development organization that partners with local communities and private entities to identify and champion regional priorities. By breaking down traditional boundaries, BRIDGE fosters public-private investments that drive sustainable economic growth, improve infrastructure, and elevate the quality of life for all residents across the region.

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