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NEWS RELEASE

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Branson hires new planning and development director



Jim Lawson, Branson's new planning & development director

Branson City Administrator Dean Kruihof has announced that Jim Lawson of Little Rock, Arkansas has been hired as the city's new director of the planning and development department. He begins his duties in Branson April 6.

With 34 years of city planning experience, Lawson was planning director in Little Rock, Arkansas and Orange Beach, Alabama, a city along the Gulf Coast. His last position with Orange Beach gave him planning experience in a resort community with a population of 5,300, but an average summer weekend population of over 300,000.

"With his depth of experience and expertise in planning and development, I am looking forward to working with Jim on issues facing Branson now and in the future," said Kruihof.

Kruihof said Lawson was selected by an interview panel made up of Alderman Rick Davis, Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Clark Harris, local developer Mike Pinkley and Kruihof.

"After selecting five finalists for the position, our panel conducted interviews March 26 and Jim was our unanimous choice," Kruihof said.

Lawson received a BA Degree in Sociology at Arkansas State University and a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Texas A&M.

He is a member of the American Planning Association and past president of the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association.

“Branson is a city planner’s dream job,” said Lawson. “It has so much going for it. Most cities have one or two strong attributes upon which you can build, but Branson has many like great people, churches, natural beauty, attractions and a strong tourism industry. I see a community of positive energy and excitement, which attracted me to apply for the planning position.”

Lawson replaces Don Stephens, who resigned as Branson’s planning and development director last October.

Ruth Denham, who has been serving as the interim planning and development director since October, will return to her position as assistant planning and development director.