



# *Milwaukee County*

Supervisor Johnny L. Thomas, 18<sup>th</sup> District

Vice-Chair, Finance & Audit Committee

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## **AFTER TWO YEARS OF STALLING, MILWAUKEE COUNTY FINALLY GETS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

*County Executive's pitiful track record on economic development comes to a close*

**Milwaukee, WI** – Milwaukee County Supervisor Johnny L. Thomas released the following statement regarding economic development efforts within Milwaukee County:

“This week, the County Board’s Economic & Community Development Committee was finally presented with a candidate for the vacant position of Economic Development Director. This key position is aimed at creating jobs and spurring economic development within Milwaukee County.

“Unfortunately, two years ago, at the height of the recession, County Executive Scott Walker scaled back the County’s economic development efforts. In fact, his 2009 Budget wiped out the entire Economic & Community Development Division and eliminated the position of Economic Development Director. Fortunately, in part to assist with Economic Recovery Zone bonds made available through the federal stimulus program, the position was re-created in 2010 and the County Board allocated full funding.

“I had offered to identify qualified individuals for the County Executive to consider for the re-created position, but my offer was not exercised. In the end, this position sat vacant for most of this year, until an interim director was finally appointed in August. It is pitiful that Milwaukee County’s Economic Development Director position sat vacant during one of the worst economic downturns in decades. During that time, we have missed so many opportunities to create job growth and economic development. One of the biggest examples is the Park East corridor, which still sits largely vacant.

“These are challenging times indeed, and the County Executive Scott Walker’s track record is disappointing. We need to create a healthier economic environment for our residents. I am looking forward to working with Damon Dorsey, the new Economic Development Director. In fact, I have already spoken with him to discuss some initiatives that we can implement together. I’m glad he’s here. But I wish we could have reached this point sooner.”

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