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Businessman selected to lead KDOT's Division of Aviation



Kansas businessman Merrill Eisenhower Atwater has been selected to be the state's next aviation director.

Atwater, of Basehor, will be part of the executive staff of the Kansas Department of Transportation in his new job. As director, he will work with the Federal Aviation Administration and aviation stakeholders across the state. He will oversee KDOT aviation programs, such as the Kansas Airport Improvement Program.

"Merrill will be the champion for aviation in Kansas. He will promote aviation as an integral part of the state's overall transportation infrastructure, which includes a

world-class highway system,” said Kansas Transportation Secretary Mike King. “I am pleased Merrill has agreed to join us.”

For more than a year, Atwater has been national sales director for Housby, a diversified Des Moines, Iowa, company that comprises Mack and Isuzu truck retail sales, truck maintenance, auctions and more. Over the past decade, he has also been vice president of business development for Bar None Auctions in Sacramento, Calif.; senior executive of development and principal of Global Green Energy Parks of Kansas City, Mo.; and president of new business development for Fox Energy Corp., of Kansas City, Mo.

“I am very excited to be part of KDOT and promote the important role aviation has in the safety and economic well-being of Kansas,” said Atwater. “Using my business background, I will tie the state’s 138 public use airports to the economic development of local communities, regions and the entire state.”

Ten years ago, Atwater, as the great-grandson of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, took part in the national celebration of the 50th anniversary of the U.S. interstate system. His great-grandfather authorized creation of the interstate system in 1956. As part of the anniversary celebration, Atwater participated in a cross-country convoy in the summer of 2006 that included stops in Abilene and Kansas City, Kan.

Atwater has a bachelor’s degree from Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph, Mo., and is working on a master’s of business administration degree from Baker University in Baldwin City.

Atwater replaces Tiffany Brown who has taken a job with the FAA in Denver.

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