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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STEWART RE-APPOINTED AS SEDC COMMITTEE CHAIR

Cross County EDC director to lead organization's external affairs

WYNNE – Cross County's Aaron Stewart has been re-appointed to a second consecutive term as chair of the external affairs committee for the Southern Economic Development Council, Inc.

Stewart, executive director of the Cross County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corp., will serve as a liaison between the SEDC and other organizations that have similar missions to partner and collaborate on initiatives of mutual interest. The SEDC is the oldest and largest regional economic development association in North America with members in 17 states in the American South.

"Aaron brings a lot of valuable experience in both politics and economic development," said Kirkley Thomas, 2009 chair of SEDC. "He has provided the external affairs committee with solid leadership for the past year, and that is why I appointed him to another term as chair of that committee."

In his position with SEDC, Stewart will work with members of his committee to create a strong federal legislative agenda representing the interest of SEDC members, voicing that position when necessary and recognizing those legislators who support that agenda.

"I am honored and excited to have the opportunity to continue serving Cross County, the state of Arkansas and the 17 states that comprise the Southern Economic Development Council," said Stewart. "The next year will prove to be both challenging and exciting

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considering the national economic recession and the new presidential administration. I look forward to working with Kirkley Thomas, Gene Stinson and SEDC's leadership to ensure that our economic development agenda in Washington receives proper consideration and approval."

Stewart will continue to bring diversified leadership and experience in his role with SEDC. To date, he has helped create more than 1,100 new jobs in Arkansas, which will provide in excess of \$33 million in new payroll and more than \$690 million in new capital investments.

He has experience at the local level with his work in Cross and Clark Counties. Stewart was instrumental in helping Clark County pass its first-ever economic development funding measure in 2007. The measure that Stewart authored in 2007 will generate approximately \$10 million for economic development and created a new countywide economic development organization for Clark County.

Stewart's previous work experience includes time as a business development project manager with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, a deputy commissioner for Arkansas Commissioner of State Lands Mark Wilcox and as a district field representative and communications asst. for U. S. Rep. Mike Ross. He also served as a volunteer on U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln's first senate campaign in 1998 and as a Capitol Hill intern in Washington, D.C. for U.S. Rep. Marion Berry.

Stewart, his wife Faith, their son Jackson and daughter Mary Ashton live in Wynne.