



Contact: Brian Thompson  
Office: (870) 238-9300  
Cell Phone: (870) 208-4878  
Email: [brian@crosscountychamber.com](mailto:brian@crosscountychamber.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CHAMBER'S THOMPSON COMPLETES FIRST YEAR OF PROGRAM**

Institute provides professional training to Chamber executives

WYNNE – Cross County's Brian Thompson recently attended the first year of the Institute for Organization Management (Institute), a four-year nonprofit leadership training program at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wis.

Thompson, 28, is the Director of External Affairs for the Cross County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corp.

"Institute graduates are recognized across the country as leaders in their communities," said Raymond P. Towle, IOM, CAE, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's vice president of Institute for Organization Management. "These individuals have the knowledge, skills, and dedication to achieve professional and organizational success in the dynamic association and chamber industries."

Since 1921, Institute has attracted association and chamber professionals from across the country to its five university sites. During the four-years, most Institute participants attend the one-week sessions at the same site, building valuable relationships with others in the industry. Through a combination of required courses and electives, Institute participants are able to enhance their own organizational management skills and add new fuel to their organizations, making them run more efficiently and effectively.

"Institute provides the most comprehensive professional development available in our profession," said Perry Webb, IOM, CCE, president and CEO of the Springdale (Ark.) Chamber of Commerce and chairman of the Institute Board of Trustees. "The program

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Allows attendees to share today's best practices in an ever changing economic environment.”

Thompson's attendance at Institute this year was made possible through a scholarship provided by Arkansas Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE).

“We really appreciate ACCE for providing Brian with a scholarship,” said Aaron Stewart, executive director of the Cross County Chamber and EDC. “The skills Brian obtained through his attendance will allow him to better serve the members of the Cross County Chamber.”

Graduates of Institute receive the IOM recognition, signifying completion of 96 hours of course instruction in nonprofit management. In addition, participants can earn points toward the Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) or Certified Association Executive (CAE) certifications. Nearly 1,000 individuals attend Institute annually.

Institute is a 501(c) (3) affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and is the premier nonprofit professional development program for association and chamber professionals, fostering individual growth through interactive learning and networking opportunities.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing more than 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region.

Thompson and his wife, Nichole, live in Vanndale.

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