

# LMC Board adds Curry to the mix

Niles man fills trustee slot left by Small's departure

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**BENTON HARBOR** — Lake Michigan College's newest board member is a former business owner who says his strong ties to the

institution will make him a good fit for the job.

LMC Board members unanimously chose Jeff Curry on Tuesday night to replace Trustee Stephen Small, who resigned last week. Curry will serve the rest of Small's term, which expires in December 2018.

The Niles resident took his seat moments later, after being sworn in by LMC Board Chairwoman Mary

Jo Tomasini.

"I'm very pleased to be here, and very honored to have you all show the confidence in me that you have (shown)," Curry said. "I feel like I've been involved with the college, maybe not quite at this level, but for a long, long time.



**CURRY**

It's our college, and it's our community's college."

Small notified the board in writing last week of his intention to resign, "because he wants to be eligible for employment now," Tomasini said, after Tuesday's meeting.

Small is hoping to find a teaching job at LMC's South Haven campus, but board rules require him to give up his seat first, Tomasini said.

"You cannot be a trustee and a part-time professor here. It's a trustee rule," she said.

LMC's conflict of interest policy requires a one-year wait after serving as a board member before becoming employed.

Small taught business law at LMC, and served as its general counsel and labor

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negotiator. He'd served on the board since 2013.

"I became a trustee to encourage LMC folks to focus attention a bit more on our South Haven campus. I hope that has happened and will continue," Small said. "I know the community north of Berrien County is highly

supportive of the college's efforts throughout the district. It has been a friendship-creating experience, and a positive one, for me."

Curry is a familiar face to the college through his work at the LMC Foundation – where he served as president from 2014 to 2016 – and the energy he showed in helping with its "Campaign For Tomorrow" fundraising effort, Tomasini said.

"Jeff is very passionate, and he'll be a great board member. He's definitely very close to the college," she said.

Curry said he's been keeping an eye on LMC for awhile through his experiences on the Niles school board and as a former chief operating officer and president of logistics company Express-1.

He leads sales strategy and business development at Stay

Metrics, and has a bachelor's degree in economics from Kalamazoo College.

Curry's wife, Diane, won the college's Distinguished Alumni award in 2012, and the pair have chaired the "Winner's Circle" Auction, he said.

Curry said he feels more than ready for his latest civic role, having spent 12 years as a former president, treasurer and trustee on Niles's board

– on which he'll remain through December, when his last term expires.

"I know the drill, at least K-12. This'll be a little different with a few more moving parts, but I enjoy the challenge of education," Curry said. "This will be a new challenge for me, and that's why I made the jump."

He said that's why he decided not to seek re-election to the Niles board.

"There's a point when I believe that a board member needs to move on to something else, and give room to the new person to provide a fresh face, (and) new ideas," Curry said.

Curry's other civic involvements include serving on the Kinexus Board, as well as a former board member and campaign chair for the United Way of Southwest Michigan.