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PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP

Rising star in economic development

ENERGY, CREATIVITY ARE CASEY'S STRENGTHS IN RECRUITING BUSINESSES TO SCOTTSDALE



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Danielle Casey took a round-about way to her job as economic development director for the city of Scottsdale and into the field of business recruitment. Now, she's a rising star in regional economic development.

Casey grew up a military brat, living everywhere from Fort Worth, Texas, to Dayton, Ohio. She landed in Arizona partway through her college career.

"Mom and I are close, and she and my stepdad when I was halfway through college got transferred per his work to Phoenix," she said. "With no other family where I was and an offer from mom to 'come check out ASU and consider transferring,' I checked it out. The palm trees and the energy on campus at ASU hooked me."

Casey graduated from Arizona State University with an anthropology degree and got a job at the Heard Muse-

DANIELLE CASEY

Title: Economic development director
Organization: City of Scottsdale

Education: Bachelor's degree in anthropology, Arizona State University; master's degree in administration, Northern Arizona University; Certified Economic Developer and Certified Economic Development Finance Professional

Residence: Scottsdale

Car: Toyota 4Runner

Grew up: I was an Air Force kid. I was born in Fort Worth, Texas, and lived in Ohio, Alabama, Louisiana, Utah, Rhode Island. I have been in Arizona longer than any other place, so I consider it home.

um. She was living in Pinal County when she landed a job with the city of Maricopa as assistant to the city manager in 2005. The bedroom community had only about 12 employees at the time, and Casey was assigned to an economic development consultant hired by the city.

"With subsequent need to support the local chamber and help it get organized, I became the dedicated economic development staff for the city and had the amazing opportunity to build the programs, tools, and department from the ground up," she said.

One of Casey's former bosses in Maricopa, Brenda Fischer, now is Glendale's city manager.

Casey was hired to run Scottsdale's economic development efforts last May. She will take over as president of the Arizona Association for Economic Development this May. The statewide group includes government economic development executives as well as site selectors and real estate brokers involved in the business recruitment game.

Scottsdale officials and other economic development professionals in the Valley cite Casey's energy and creativity for her ability to succeed.

"I think she is incredible," said Jeanine

Jerkovic, economic administrator for the city of Glendale.

Casey has taken well to Scottsdale, both as a working and living environment.

"Living in Indian Bend Wash, it is tough to not want to be outside, jogging, biking," she said.

If she gets a free minute, which is rare, Casey said she enjoys cooking and trying new recipes, even if she has to Google the ingredients.

"I like the challenge," she said.

Currently she is working with the Scottsdale City Council and other city managers on a new strategic economic plan for the city. That includes options for the McDowell Road area, which has lost a number of car dealerships during the past decade.

Casey said the key is learning how to consolidate various parcels of land with separate owners to spur larger redevelopment efforts.

Casey also is seeing increased interest from high-tech companies and those seeking younger workers in the Old Town area.

"There is a lot of interest from tech and software firms," she said.

She noted Scottsdale's median age is 44 citywide, but 31 in the downtown area.

