

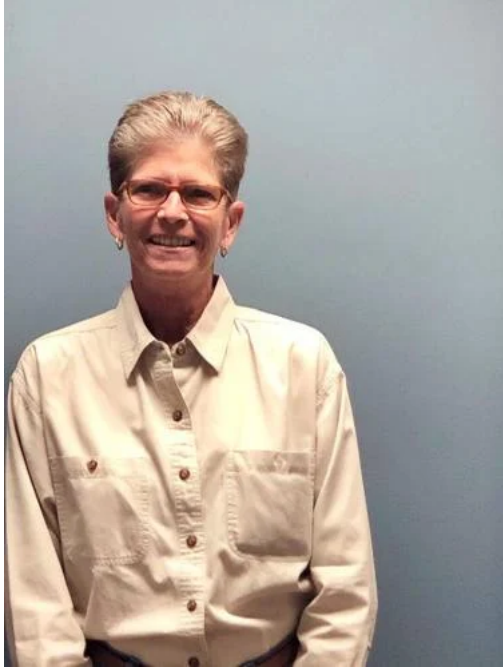
[https://www.thenewsenterprise.com/features/wednesdays\\_woman/johnson-to-retire-from-lincoln-trail-add-after-38-years/article\\_165f4d53-5f17-550a-93fe-d78c6393627e.html](https://www.thenewsenterprise.com/features/wednesdays_woman/johnson-to-retire-from-lincoln-trail-add-after-38-years/article_165f4d53-5f17-550a-93fe-d78c6393627e.html)

## WEDNESDAY'S WOMAN

# Johnson to retire from Lincoln Trail ADD after 38 years

By AMY SMITH THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE  
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Sherry Johnson retires from the Lincoln Trail ADD after 38 years.

Submitted

### Getting to know Sherry Johnson

Pets: A 17-year-old Maine Coon cat

Favorite food: Seafood, especially anything with crab

Favorite color: Black

Favorite genre of music: She likes it all.

Favorite movie: "On Golden Pond"

Favorite TV series: "NCIS"

Favorite author: Lisa Gardner

Favorite book: "The Boxcar Children"

Favorite vacation spot: Anywhere along the Gulf Coast

Favorite season: Spring

After planning to be around for only a few years, Sherry Johnson is retiring from the Lincoln Trail Area Development District after 38 years of service to the region.

Johnson is scheduled to retire May 31.

She has served as the director of workforce development since 1987 and her departure will be impactful.

After graduating from Western Kentucky University and working in public administration, Johnson did an internship at Green River ADD. She came to the Lincoln Trail ADD about three months after she completed her master's degree.

"I've been here ever since," Johnson said. "I've been very blessed to be here. My original intent was to be there three to five years, and here I am after 38 years and still love what I do, but it's time to rest awhile."

Favorite memory: "Every Mother's Day weekend, watching my grandmother wait for me to come out and plant her flowers."

Advice to the reader, "Embrace change. Change is getting ready to grow exponentially here, and we all have to be prepared for it."

### To nominate a Wednesday's Woman

To submit a nomination for a Wednesday's Woman, email [asmith@thenewsenterprise.com](mailto:asmith@thenewsenterprise.com).

Explaining her role with workforce development, Johnson said, "We work mainly with individual job seekers, assisting them with their training needs and upscaling needs, to go into jobs that are well-paying to help them be self-sufficient. And we assist the businesses that are looking for qualified workforce. And that's a challenge right now."

Because she connects workers and employers, Johnson finds the most rewarding aspect of her career is helping the people and businesses in the region.

"It wouldn't matter if we helped one or a thousand or a million, any time we've helped a business or an individual, we've done our job," Johnson said. "That's what I enjoy most."

Beth Avey, vice president of the Knox Regional Development Alliance, acknowledged Johnson's contribution.

"Sherry is a teacher, a mentor and an unsung hero," Avey said. "I would argue that there is no one else in the state who knows workforce development more than Sherry. I think sometimes she's not as appreciated as she should be. She's quiet, but when she speaks up, she offers such valuable insight."

Avey recalled how Johnson has made her a "workforce geek" over the years as they have collaborated on projects.

"Our community may not realize how much we will miss her and how much she brings to the table," Avey said. "She's left an amazing legacy as it relates to workforce development."

Daniel London, executive director of Lincoln Trail ADD, agrees that Johnson's absence will be greatly felt throughout the region.

"Sherry has an innate and keen ability to collaborate and bring all stakeholders together for the common good of the region to accomplish today's task or the task required five years from now," London said. "Her deep knowledge and talents concerning workforce development have been integral in the economic

achievements of this region. She's the 'go to' for regional and state leaders for all things workforce, and her absence from the scene is going to be missed and felt for a very long time."

Jackie Masterson, deputy director, has worked with Johnson for most of her tenure and admires her professionalism as well.

"She is the ultimate professional with an unrivaled work ethic, and when she commits to doing something, you better bet it's done timely and with the highest of standards," Masterson said.

Like London, Masterson also appreciates Johnson's collaborative ability to, "always strive to come up with a fair and sound solution."

Family means everything to Johnson, and her co-workers and associates sense her compassion and respect for others.

"Sherry treats her team like family and always encourages continuous learning in their roles," Masterson said. "She is well-respected in the workforce development community at the state and local level and among her colleagues."

Avey also values Johnson's friendship saying, "Sherry is one of the kindest people you will ever meet. She is very caring. Just as much as she is an amazing professional, she is an amazing human. It's been a privilege working with her, and I feel very fortunate to call her friend."

Johnson looks forward to time to "play in the dirt" after she retires, and because family is so important to her, she plans to stay close to home for the time being to be near her aging mother.

"I'm all she's got, and I want to make sure I'm close if she needs me," Johnson said. "She comes first."

Johnson's father passed away in 2019 and her younger sister died in 2021. Switching roles with her parents to become the caregiver is one of the most difficult things Johnson has faced.

"They're the strongest two people I know, and I have one left and I want to cherish every moment with (Mom), especially after my sister passed away and being the only one there," Johnson said. "That's a challenge; it's one I'm willing to accept and appreciate, but it's different. It's different."

Johnson summed up her transition saying, "Change is part of life, and we just have to learn to adapt, and we just have to figure that out. Maybe I'll appear again somewhere and offer assistance where it's needed, but it's time for new blood to come in and tackle the BlueOval project because this is big. This is very big."

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