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# Missouri Selects Hillary Starnes for Delta Leadership Program

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**Missouri selects 4 fellows for Delta leadership program**  
**Delta Regional Authority effort encourages regional collaboration**

Mississippi River Delta Region - Missouri is sending four leaders from across the southeastern portion of the state to the Delta Regional Authority's (DRA) Delta Leadership Institute (DLI.) They will join fellows from seven other states and participate in the 10-month DLI Executive Academy program to help further their skills in community leadership and policy development to promote regional collaboration and local economic growth across DRA's eight- state region.

Missouri's DLI fellows will attend six sessions across the region, visiting each of the eight states in the DRA footprint. They will engage in policy and program development, advocacy training, case-study discussions, and on-the-ground field experiences aligned with DRA's priorities for the region. Those priorities include: transportation and infrastructure; workforce training and education; entrepreneurship and disaster resilience for small businesses and communities; public health; policy and governance; and culture and tourism.

"DRA is pleased to begin working with this new class of leaders from southeast Missouri who are committed to learning from each other and working together with their fellow leaders from other states to build a strong future for the Delta," said Peter Kinder,

alternate federal co- chairman of DRA. “As a Missouri native, I am proud to announce this group and support their collaborative efforts with their colleagues from other Delta-region states.”

The fellows, who were selected by Gov. Greitens and DRA leadership, represent a diverse cohort of community leaders. The class includes seven members from Alabama; eight from Arkansas; five from Illinois; five from Kentucky; seven from Louisiana; eight from Mississippi; four from Missouri; and seven from Tennessee.

Missouri’s 2017-2018 DLI Executive Academy fellows are:

- Kelli Behrle of Perryville | Project Coordinator at the Southeast Missouri State University’s Economic and Business Engagement Center
- Trish Erzfeld of Perryville | Director of Perry County Heritage Tourism
- Jay Lancaster of Sikeston | Director of Public Works for the City of Sikeston
- Hillary Starnes of Dexter | Executive Director of the Dexter Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development

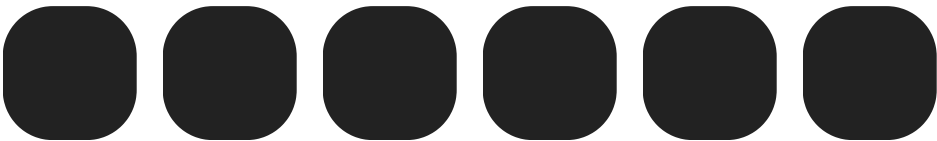
Since 2005, DLI has worked to strengthen the knowledge and skills of community leaders across the Delta by broadening their understanding of regional issues and building a corps of alumni that have a regional and national perspective. Upon graduation, the 51 new members will have a toolkit of resources for addressing issues facing their local communities and providing the training and professional development needed to extend the pipeline of skilled local leadership within Delta communities.

### **About the Delta Regional Authority and the Delta Leadership Institute**

The DRA is a federal-state partnership created by Congress in 2000 to help create jobs, build communities, and improve lives through strategic investments in economic development and infrastructure projects in 252 counties and parishes across eight states. DRA has provided leadership development to nearly 500 community leaders over twelve years and strengthened regional collaboration through the Delta Leadership Institute. DLI is a program of the Delta Regional Authority in partnership with three institutions of higher education from the DRA’s states: the University of Alabama, Arkansas State University-Jonesboro and the University of Louisiana Monroe. Learn more at [www.dra.gov/leadership](http://www.dra.gov/leadership).

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