

## Golden Leaf Foundation Names New President

By Administrator

Monday, 23 September 2019 09:23 - Last Updated Monday, 23 September 2019 09:26

---

The Golden LEAF Foundation Board announced Scott Hamilton was selected to be the organization's new president.

"I am honored to have been selected as the next president of Golden LEAF - to continue the important work the Foundation was tasked with 20 years ago: providing rural North Carolina with funding for infrastructure, education and job training to give communities the needed support to educate their local workforce, attract jobs, and grow their local economies" said Hamilton. "Through the partnerships and programs already in place, I am excited for Golden LEAF to continue helping rural North Carolina create better futures for its residents in the years ahead."

Since 2014, Hamilton has served as the Executive Director of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a Federal-State partnership with the mission to innovate, partner and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia including 29 counties in North Carolina. During his tenure, he led a staff of over 50 to invest nearly \$600 million to support education and workforce training, highway construction, water and sewer system construction, leadership development, small business start-ups and expansions, energy and health. Prior to joining the ARC, Hamilton served in leadership roles with various county and regional economic development organizations in North Carolina, including most recently as President and CEO of AdvantageWest, a nonprofit regional economic development partnership serving the westernmost counties of North Carolina.

The Golden LEAF Foundation – governed by a 15-member Board of Directors appointed by the state's Legislative and Executive branches – was created by the General Assembly 20 years ago following the Master Settlement Agreement between the states and the cigarette manufacturers. Its goal is to support rural North Carolina and help transform the economy of rural, tobacco dependent and economically distressed areas of the state. The Foundation supports these communities by providing critical resources through grants, scholarships to rural students and, in recent years, by managing the state's relief and recovery funding to support residents and communities affected by hurricanes.

"The Board of Directors is fortunate to have the leadership of Scott Hamilton to help guide the organization as we seek additional opportunities to help North Carolina's rural communities grow and prosper," said Board Chair Randy Isenhower. "During Golden LEAF's 20 year history, we have seen North Carolina transform into a top-tier economy. Instead of leaving rural North Carolina behind, organizations like Golden LEAF and our many partners, have worked to ensure these communities are able to draw industries and create jobs. Scott joins Golden LEAF at the right time to help the organization continue our important work for North Carolina."

Hamilton will serve as Foundation's third president leading into Golden LEAF's twentieth anniversary. The Foundation has awarded 1,775 grants totaling \$872 million over its 20 years.

## Golden Leaf Foundation Names New President

By Administrator

Monday, 23 September 2019 09:23 - Last Updated Monday, 23 September 2019 09:26

---

The Board's selection followed a thorough search process led by Golden LEAF's Search Committee, a subset of the Golden LEAF Board of Directors. The process was facilitated by Elinvar, a Raleigh-based executive search and leadership development firm. The Search Committee met with several candidates before recommending finalists to the Golden LEAF Board, which interviewed the finalists and selected Hamilton.

"We are grateful to have had so many qualified candidates who want to help build a better North Carolina," said Lee Roberts, Chair of the Foundation's Search Committee. "Scott's leadership will bolster the Foundation and our work. As North Carolina continues to grow and prosper, rural North Carolina stands ready to thrive as well. Scott has a particularly successful record of building organizations that bring economic opportunities to rural communities, and we look forward to his doing the same for the communities we serve."

Hamilton is from Hendersonville, NC and is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Hamilton received additional training and certification in economic development from the University of North Carolina School of Government, the Georgia Institute of Technology and the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma. Hamilton is also an alumnus of the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center's Rural Economic Development Institute. Hamilton and his wife have two grown daughters and two grandsons residing in Hendersonville.

### **About the Golden LEAF Foundation**

The Golden LEAF Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1999 to receive a portion of North Carolina's funding received from the Master Settlement Agreement with cigarette manufacturers. For 20 years, Golden LEAF has worked to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantsmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.

The Foundation has provided lasting impact to tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and rural areas of the state by helping create 64,000 jobs, more than half a billion dollars in new payroll and more than 77,000 workers trained or retrained for higher wages.

To learn more about the Golden LEAF Foundation, visit [www.goldenleaf.org](http://www.goldenleaf.org) or call 888-684-8404.