

James A. Upchurch
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Summary

Local government executive with administrative and legislative experience. Experience in both rural and urban communities. Managed budgets in excess of \$800 Million. Secured over \$6 Billion in economic investment and passed a \$2 Billion school bond. Recognized for achievements related to public-private partnerships, community engagement, public health equity, and fiscal transparency.

Professional Experience

2024 – Current	Forward McDuffie President & CEO - \$140,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revitalizing downtown through negotiating building purchases, managing renovations, grant creation, loan programs, and small business recruitment• Transforming an underutilized industrial park into a viable hub for manufacturing and distribution• Serves as the Economic Development Director for the City of Thomson and the County of McDuffie. Also serves as the Executive Director for the Downtown Development Authority and the Industrial Development Authority. Oversees the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau
2023 – 2024	City of Stonecrest, Georgia – Population 62,000 Director, Communications Department & PIO - \$110,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided strategic counsel to the Mayor, Council, and Staff on effective communication and community engagement initiatives, aligning objectives with the city's overarching goals• Pioneered comprehensive branding and marketing efforts, strategically positioning the city for economic development, increased tourism, and enhanced staff recruitment• Spearheaded all internal and external communication efforts for the city covering traditional print, digital, and in person media to strengthen relationships with community stakeholders• Successfully coordinated a myriad of community events, skillfully hosting ribbon-cutting ceremonies and executing groundbreaking initiatives that celebrated community milestones
2020 – 2023	County of Guilford, North Carolina – Population 545,000 County Commissioner <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orchestrated the seamless operation of all county functions, exhibiting adept oversight over 2,700 employees, 28 departments, and an \$840,000,000 budget, ensuring the county's fiscal responsibility and operational excellence• Played a pivotal role in transformative public-private partnerships, notably contributing to initiatives such as Truist Park, Downtown High Point Catalyst Project, Sandhills Mental Health Hospital, Cone Health School Tele-Health Program, and other strategic collaborations that significantly advanced the county's public services landscape• Successfully negotiated and secured an impressive \$6 Billion in economic investment, fostering sustainable growth and prosperity within the county, and positioning Guilford as an attractive hub for business development.• Spearheaded the creation of the County's Public Relations Department, implementing strategic communication initiatives to enhance transparency, engage the community, and fortify the county's public image• Innovatively founded the "Guilford County Homelessness Taskforce" with a mission to eradicate homelessness, showcasing a commitment to addressing crucial social issues and improving the quality of life for residents

- Earned national acclaim from the U.S Department of the Treasury for exemplary Equity and Outcomes related to Community Engagement during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring a dedication to inclusive and impactful leadership
- Held a prominent role representing the state on the Finance, Pensions, and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, contributing expertise and strategy

2018 – 2020

St. Andrews University

Associate Professor of Business | Director of Communications - \$85,000

- Contributed to the academic community by instructing undergraduate business courses in Marketing, Business Analytics, Finance, and Management, fostering a dynamic and enriching learning environment for students
- Developed compelling pitches, news releases, media advisories, talking points, and social media posts, leveraging thorough research and data analysis. Resulted in the strategic positioning of the University as a prominent authority in higher education
- Spearheaded marketing initiatives that led to an 86% surge in website traffic, showcasing the successful execution of digital marketing strategies.
- Amplified the University's social media presence by cultivating a 42% growth in followers and an impressive 270% increase in engagement reactions, demonstrating an adept understanding of audience engagement and content optimization

*Additional work history is available upon request

Education

University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Master of Arts in Business Administration

East Carolina University

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Earned bachelor's degree at 19 years old