



Kristina Hudson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ONEREDMOND
AND WASHINGTON INTERACTIVE NETWORK

When Kristina Hudson graduated from the University of Washington in 1992, she envisioned putting her advertising and communications degree to use in the public relations sphere.

“My plan was to get into a small company and learn everything I could know (in public relations), then move and go to a bigger company, and then a bigger company,” Hudson remembered of her post-college plans.

It was, therefore, a fortuitous path that led the Bellevue High School graduate to instead cut her teeth in film and interactive media and alight on a 20-year career in economic development.

“I think the universe always puts you where you’re supposed to be,” Hudson said. “I’m actually really happy that I (ended up) in economic development.”

Though disconnected from her once-intended career, Hudson still is a communicator at heart. But today she uses those skills to tout the accomplishments of the two organizations she oversees as executive director.

The first is the Washington Interactive Network (WIN), a nonprofit Hudson founded in 2004 aimed at fostering the state’s healthy cluster of more than 400 interactive media companies. The other organization is OneRedmond, an economic-development enterprise, chamber of commerce, and public foundation all under one roof.

Boasting an advisory panel with industry veterans like Xbox creator Ed Fries, WIN’s diverse ranks include goliath Eastside game developers — Microsoft, Nintendo, Valve, Bungie, Wizards of the Coast, and ArenaNet — as well as emerging startup developers.

Through partnerships with educational institutions, business and community leaders, and the city governments, WIN has cultivated a community around interactive media companies, helping the industry grow to more than 3,000 jobs with a regional economic impact of more than \$400 million.

Though Hudson founded WIN while she was working for the State of Washington, she carried the nonprofit with her to a job at Enterprise Seattle — now known as the Economic Development Council of Seattle and King County — in 2006 and, in 2014, she brought WIN under the auspices of her then-new employer, OneRedmond. This earned her the unofficial title of The Queen of Interactive Media.

“I have done significant work in that industry, and that’s what a lot of people know me for,” Hudson said, laughing at the nickname.

In April 2019, Hudson was promoted to OneRedmond’s top position, and for more than a year, she has been putting her stamp on the organization and the Redmond community. Our sister publication, *425 Business*, caught up with her to discuss her career, the future of interactive media, and all things Redmond.

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What was it about OneRedmond that appealed to you?

It was really interesting to me because OneRedmond was very unique in the world of economic development. It wasn’t funded by economic development dollars that were coming from the state or from the county, as most of those types of organizations do. This was funded specifically by companies in Redmond and the City of Redmond to do some very particular things that were needed in the economy for the city and the Eastside. As you know, we are the economic development arm on behalf of the region, as well as the Redmond community’s chamber of commerce. And we also manage the community foundation.

You started at OneRedmond as the vice president of business expansion before being promoted to executive director. What has been your focus since?

I’ve been not only trying to put my own stamp on OneRedmond, but it’s also about bringing OneRedmond to a regional focus. From its inception, it was always the plan to elevate our economic development efforts regionally. We’re doing that now and have been for the last year.

What areas of economic development have been paramount for OneRedmond going forward?

The Eastside is a powerhouse economy, but for years we have not received the appropriate distribution of resources. So, affordable housing, transportation, and education are three immediate problem areas that need to be addressed by the Eastside, and we need to be doing that with a united voice.

It seems like education is really what starts things, and the rest

cascades from there. What work has OneRedmond been doing to move the needle forward on this issue?

We already have the Lake Washington Institute of Technology, as well as Cascadia College, on our board. DigiPen Institute of Technology also is a strong partner. And in a lot of the workforce development projects that I have worked on over the last year, we have worked with a number of community and technical colleges, as well as our four-year-degree-granting institutions.

With things like the OneEastside Partnership and the Innovation Triangle, it seems like so much of what OneRedmond does isn’t just about Redmond, but the Eastside as a whole, right?

When I talk about the OneEastside Partnership, I’m talking about a partnership with all the organizations that want all the same things. My mission is to gather everyone together to ensure that we all are on the same page and we can get what needs to be done, done. ... And the Innovation Triangle: This is an effort to brand the Eastside as a hub of innovation and technology to the world. We all know what great things are happening here, but someone in Japan might not know that Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland have some of the biggest companies in the world, making us a hub of innovation.

As your first year as executive director came to a close, what are you most proud of?

I’m proud of the way that we’ve been communicating the work that we’ve been doing. I think that before I arrived here, we were Redmond’s best-kept secret or the Eastside’s best-kept secret. We were doing great work, but hardly anyone knew about it. ■