

***Joanna S. Helms, Director***  
Apex Economic Development



Joanna was appointed in July 2014 to serve as the first Economic Development Director for the Town of Apex, North Carolina. In this role she is responsible for recruiting new business and industry to the Apex community, which was ranked “Best Places to Live: #9 in America, and #1 in North Carolina” (*CNN/Money Magazine* August 2013). Previously she served as President of the Wayne County Development Alliance, Inc. located in Goldsboro, North Carolina for 14 years and as Vice President for 7 years. The Alliance is a private/public, non-profit economic development agency serving Wayne County and its 7 municipalities.

She is a native of Syracuse, New York; moved to Cary, North Carolina in 1974 and graduated from Apex High School in 1980. Joanna is a graduate of Western Carolina University with a BS Degree in Planning and is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute at Oklahoma University. Other leadership and economic development courses completed include the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Institute, Leadership NC and Leadership America NC.

Joanna is a member of several professional organizations, including the North Carolina Economic Developers Association where she served on the Board of Directors from 2007-2010. Locally, she is involved in the Apex Rotary Club and Western Wake Young Life Committee.

In June 2008, she was named the North Carolina Economic Developer of the Year. In June 2011 she was named North Carolina Business and Professional Woman of the Year.

Joanna is married to James Timothy (Tim) Helms and has two sons, Adrian, 19, and Lucas, 18.