

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE |
Suze Parker is new chairwoman

UP FOR A CHALLENGE

The president and CEO of Parker Communications Group is the second woman to head the chamber in its 40-year history.

By JOE HENDERSON
Special to The Star

Suze Parker has no illusions about the challenge she faces as the new chairwoman of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce.

"I think almost everyone would agree that it's the economy," said Parker, who this month became the second woman in the to chair the board of directors in the chamber's 40-year history.

Parker is president and CEO of Parker Communications Group and has been a member of the chamber board since 2002. She follows in the footsteps of Katie Logan, who in 1999 became the first woman to head the chamber's board.

"The chamber is challenged, perhaps as never before, to provide leadership and resources and to have an impact in a very challenging economy," Parker said. "We will achieve this by serving as a voice for all Overland Park businesses in the state legislature, by providing useable training and networking opportunities for members and by building visibility for this city through economic development efforts."

Parker guesses that the economic crisis will



SUSAN PFANNMULLER | SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Suze Parker is taking the reigns as the new chairwoman of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce.

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last two or two and a half years.

"Because our members are businesses we realize that with the economy as it is now, there is a need to help them position themselves for the time when the economy improves, which sometimes means layoffs and restructuring," Parker said.

A 1983 graduate of Kansas State University with a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's in education, Parker has been in the Kansas City area since her graduation. She came to Overland Park two years later.

Parker founded Parker Communications Group in 2005. She was president of the Kansas City Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America in 1995 and was named the organization's Public Relations Professional of the Year in 2002/2003.

"I expect to draw on my expertise as a public relations professional in developing greater visibility for the chamber in the Kansas City metro area as well

"Suze is a great communicator who will be able to get her message out to the community."

GREG MUSIL, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERLAND PARK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

as in Overland Park," she added.

Her work with the Chamber includes leadership of the communications task force and service on the Economic Development Council's executive committee. She also is a member of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce's Johnson County Leadership Council.

"Suze has provided excellent leadership to the Chamber," said chamber president Tracey Osborne. "Her creativity and energy have provided new focus for our communication and marketing efforts. Her leadership experience in the community will direct our economic development and advocacy efforts to meet the needs of our diverse membership."

Greg Musil, an Overland Park attorney who Parker succeeds as chairman of the board, believes Parker will be a stabilizing influence in the business community. "She is a good, solid voice during these challenging

economic times," he said.

"As chairman she will work with the president and board members to establish priorities for the things she wants to accomplish during her term," Musil said. "Of course, no matter how well you plan there are always unexpected surprises that turn up in the legislature or city council."

"Suze is a great communicator who will be able to get her message out to the community," he added.

Parker recently completed a three-year term on the Board of the National Kidney Foundation, where she chaired the foundation's marketing committee. She is a founding board member of BreakPointe Charities, a non-profit organization that meets short-term financial and service requirements of needy individuals in the Kansas City community.

She will serve a one-year term.