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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Felicia Hart Hired to Lead Economic Development and Tourism Efforts for Clarke County and Town of Berryville**

BERRYVILLE, VA — Felicia Hart, who has served as Clarke County’s part-time interim Director of Economic Development & Tourism since March, was on June 19 hired as the first-ever, full-time Director of Economic Development & Tourism for both the county and its seat, the Town of Berryville.

Eight individuals applied for the position and four interviewed with the Berryville-Clarke County Joint Committee on Economic Development & Tourism, which is composed of two Town Council members and two county Board of Supervisors members. The county and town both fund the director’s salary, and together they will set short-term and long-term goals for Hart.

Most recently, Hart was director of community development and tourism for Front Royal. She previously worked as downtown coordinator for the Town of Strasburg, marketing-development director for the Community Foundation of the Northern Shenandoah Valley, and marketing assistant at First Bank in Strasburg.

As interim director, Hart began connecting Clarke County business owners with resources to help them through unprecedented closures and restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We had good candidates for the position. Felicia was unanimously picked because of her experience and enthusiasm,” said Supervisors chair David Weiss, who serves on the Joint Committee on Economic Development & Tourism. “She did a great job during the first months of the COVID-19 crisis. Even though she was limited by social distancing, she connected with many business owners and was very well received.”

Weiss added, “We believe Felicia’s connections in this region and the state will greatly benefit all businesses in Clarke County.”

Newly elected mayor of Berryville and long-time Town Council member Harry “Jay” Arnold said, “The Town is most appreciative to be working cooperatively with the Clarke County Board of Supervisors on economic development that benefits all of us. We were fortunate to have well-qualified candidates apply for the position. Ms. Hart has already established important working relationships with our regional partners and state economic development offices.” Arnold also serves on the Joint Committee on Economic Development & Tourism.

Clarke County is committed to preserving its scenic beauty and agricultural heritage as well as its natural and historic resources. The county and Berryville are equally committed to thoughtfully expanding new and existing businesses and neighborhoods. Economic development involves supporting the existing businesses as well as recruiting new businesses and promoting tourism, which benefits businesses such as restaurants and retail shops.

For more information on economic development, go to [yesclarkecounty.com](http://yesclarkecounty.com). Go to the county's tourism website [clarketurism.com](http://clarketurism.com). Contact Director of Economic Development & Tourism Felicia Hart at (540) 955-5107 or [fhart@clarkecounty.gov](mailto:fhart@clarkecounty.gov).

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