



LEAD THE FUTURE *of Southern Kentucky*

President & Chief Executive Officer

SOMERSET-PULASKI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY





**An exceptional leadership opportunity awaits in one of Kentucky's fastest-growing and most innovative communities:
*Somerset-Pulaski County, The Capital of Lake Cumberland.***



THE OPPORTUNITY

Who is the ideal candidate?

The next President & CEO will lead SPEDA into a new era — guiding major projects, partnerships, and investments that shape the region's economic landscape for decades to come.

This role offers the rare chance to:

- Lead a nationally recognized model of city-county collaboration and quality-of-life centered economy;
- Drive job creation and community prosperity in a region poised for transformative growth;
- Work alongside visionary local leadership committed to innovation, transparency, and long-term success.

The ideal candidate will bring strategic vision, operational excellence, and a passion for people — someone who thrives at the intersection of business, government, and community development.



What's the impact?

Scan to browse our annual impact reports, which showcase Somerset-Pulaski County's economic growth since SPEDA's inception.

SPEDA was established to reimagine economic and community development in rural America. Through collaboration, transparency, and innovation, SPEDA drives growth that benefits every resident and business in the Somerset-Pulaski County region with an unparalleled focus on quality of life.

From attracting record new and expanded business investment and record tourism spending to launching innovative workforce initiatives and supporting small business mini-grants, SPEDA's mission is simple yet profound: *to make Somerset and Pulaski County the easiest, friendliest, and most innovative place in Kentucky to do business.*

BY THE NUMBERS

\$500+ million

in new and existing business investment since SPEDA's inception

somerset-pulaski county | kentucky

47%

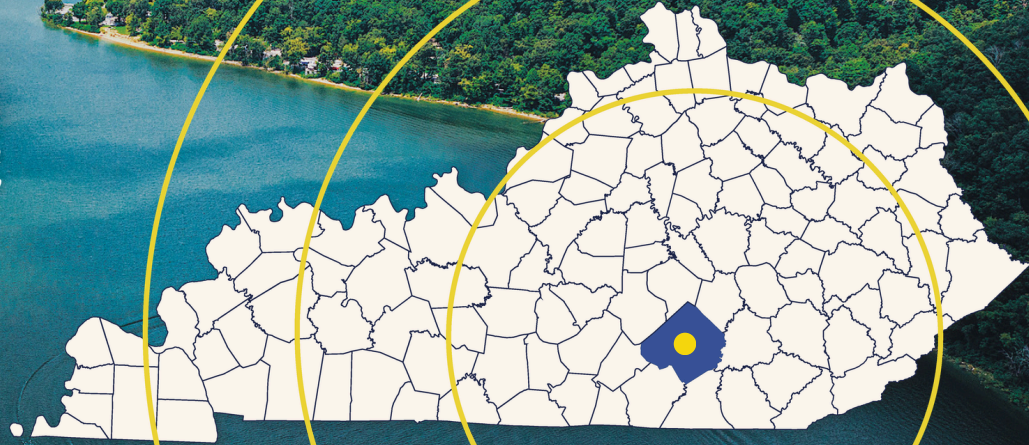
of the U.S. population lives within 600 miles of Pulaski County

53%

of the nation's manufacturing employment lives within 600 miles of Pulaski County

17

of the nation's major metro areas are within the same radius



POPULATION 65,023
2020 U.S. Census

VISITATION 4+ million
Annual estimate

Nestled in the heart of Southern Kentucky, Somerset-Pulaski County is a thriving hub of commerce, culture, and tourism.

Home to more than 65,000 residents, Somerset is **The Capital of Lake Cumberland** — the largest city located on the ninth largest manmade reservoir in the United States. This community is celebrated for its natural beauty, entrepreneurial spirit, and outstanding quality of life.

Somerset-Pulaski County's central location, within a day's drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population, and its pro-business environment make it an ideal home for both global manufacturers and small startups alike.

TOP INDUSTRIES

- Tourism
- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Agriculture



The Spirit of Southern Kentucky

- ▶ **Outdoor Adventure:** 1,200 miles of Lake Cumberland shoreline for boating, fishing, and relaxation.
- ▶ **Bourbon:** Future southern anchor of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, home to Horse Soldier Farms Distillery Experience.
- ▶ **Vibrant Downtown:** Award-winning restaurants, boutique shops, and cultural venues like The Virginia.
- ▶ **Events & Arts:** Festivals such as Moonlight Festival, Master Musicians Festival and Somernites Cruise bring tens of thousands of visitors each year.
- ▶ **Education & Health:** Exceptional public and private K-12 options and top-tier healthcare facilities.

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POSITION SUMMARY

The SPEDA President & CEO is a **highly visible, hands-on** leadership role responsible for advancing the organization's mission, vision, and objectives. This individual must balance **strategic thinking** with **operational management, community engagement, and policy collaboration** — serving as both the architect and ambassador of Somerset-Pulaski County's continued economic success.

This position is **demanding, fast-paced, and rewarding** — ideal for an **energetic, detail-oriented** professional who thrives on **challenge, creativity, and results**. It is an **“at-will”** position that reports to the SPEDA Board of Directors, comprised of the Mayor of Somerset, the Pulaski County Judge-Executive, and six appointed members.

Essential Responsibilities

- Operate under the direction of the SPEDA Board of Directors to implement strategic goals and initiatives.
- Oversee SPEDA's operational, financial, and administrative performance, ensuring efficiency and compliance.
- Build and sustain partnerships across the public and private sectors, including local, state, and federal agencies.
- Lead business recruitment, retention, and expansion efforts across key industries such as manufacturing, retail, tourism, and entrepreneurship.
- Represent SPEDA at public meetings, conferences, and events; serve as the organization's chief spokesperson.
- Cultivate a collaborative, consensus-driven organizational culture that promotes teamwork and transparency.
- Stay abreast of economic development trends and best practices; provide timely recommendations to the Board.
- Regularly attend City Council and Fiscal Court meetings, maintaining strong relationships with elected officials.
- Oversee community projects that enhance quality of life, workforce development, and educational opportunities.

Preferred Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in business, economics, public administration, or related field.
- Proven leadership experience in economic development, business management, or public administration.
- Proven ability to lead complex projects, manage budgets, and deliver measurable results.
- Excellent communication, negotiation, and interpersonal skills.
- Experience in both public and private sectors preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to inspire, influence, and unify diverse stakeholders.
- High integrity, discretion, and commitment to community advancement.

Compensation & Benefits

- Salary potential begins at \$100,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications.
- Simple IRA with SPEDA match.
- Health, dental, and vision insurance coverage.
- Paid time off (vacation and sick days).
- Company vehicle provided.
- Supportive, innovative, and mission-driven workplace culture.

continued ►

Application Process

Interested candidates should submit:

- A cover letter detailing their interest and qualifications;
- A current, detailed résumé;
- All relevant contact information; and
- Three professional references.

Send materials to:

SPEDA

Attn: Chris Girdler, President & CEO

P.O. Box 409, Somerset, KY 42502

Email: chris@speda.org and jessica@speda.org

Deadline & Interview Timeline

- All applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. ET on July 31, 2026.
- Late applications will not be considered.
- All candidate applications will be handled with strict confidentiality.
- The Board of Directors will review all applications and schedule interviews soon after the application deadline.
- A candidate is expected to be selected for the position by Fall 2026.

Equal Opportunity Statement

SPEDA is an equal opportunity employer. All applicants will be considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other status protected by law.



Learn how we're leading the way.
somersetkyleads.com



Lead the next chapter of growth for Somerset-Pulaski County and help shape the future of Southern Kentucky.

SPEDA Commerce Park, a new 142-acre, certified build-ready industrial development in Eastern Pulaski County, and the thriving Valley Oak Commerce Complex provide state-of-the-art industrial infrastructure. Ongoing investments in fiber-optic data centers, technology, and workforce development ensure long-term competitiveness.

SPEDA's next President & CEO will usher in a new era of economic development success by recruiting prospective tenants to SPEDA Commerce Park and enhancing the experience for existing industries located in Valley Oak.

SPEDA Commerce Park