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## United Way Online LexisNexis News Feed

Article:	<b>Agency hires its next leader: New president, CEO to begin work Aug. 20</b>
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Jul. 25--Scott Ferguson sees great growth in the Columbus area. With it comes a great challenge for United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley.

"We must make sure the services provided through our agencies keep up with the increased demand," says Ferguson, named Tuesday as president and chief executive officer of the nonprofit organization.

He will take over the \$102,000 position on Aug. 20, a little more than two weeks before the fundraising campaign kickoff on Sept. 6. The last campaign received a record \$6,633,899 in pledges.

"It's a little scary, but sometimes it's better to move on to a bigger area," Ferguson said.

Ferguson has been in United Way leadership for nearly 18 years in places such as Aberdeen, S.D., and Atlantic City, N.J. He comes to Columbus from his position as United Way executive director in Utica, N.Y.

He is replacing Guy Sims, who resigned at the end of January. United Way Board Chairwoman Sheree Mitchell has been serving as interim president.

"I'm just thrilled to get someone like Scott to be our new president," says Mitchell, president and CEO of the Growing Room Development Centers. "He has a deep, deep knowledge of the kind of impact United Way has on a community. He's done a great job wherever he has been and I think he will maximize our efforts and open some new avenues."

Mitchell said United Way did an exhaustive national search.

"We did talk to local people," she said.

After gathering feedback from volunteer leaders and key stakeholders, the United Way Executive Committee began its search. To enhance the effort, it enlisted the volunteer services of Michael Silverstein, president and managing director of the Halycon Group, a professional recruiting firm in Columbus.

A former accountant, Ferguson brings with him a strong business acumen, which appealed to the board. He has been praised for his innovative strategies in Utica and led a merger with a neighboring United Way there, a move which combined resources on a regional level to effect greater change in the community.

"We are very fortunate to have Scott Ferguson," says Abbott Turner, a United Way executive board member. "Much of our success in this community can be attributed to visionary leaders, strong partnerships across the community, widespread volunteer support and a caring and dedicated team of United Way professionals. Scott Ferguson has accomplished so much in the communities in which he has lived and served and will build upon our continued growth."

"When I visited Columbus, I was really impressed with the civic pride I found when I talked to people," says Ferguson, a 54-year-old Maine native. "The volunteers and the staff really work hard and have gotten good results."

He said he wants to see United Way extend more services to outlying areas. In the last allocation in June, United Way divided \$4,972,301 among 50 community grants in 24 partner agencies and seven community partnership grants.

Ferguson has been married 31 years to his wife, Dona, a nursing educator.

"We have two cats and no children," says the University of Southern Maine alum. "I love to jog and look forward to doing it without snow."

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