



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **THE COSANTI FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNOUNCES UPDATE IN ONGOING LEADERSHIP TRANSITION**

## **Two Executives with Strong Ties to the Foundation Assume Key Roles**

MAY 28, 2021, Mayer, AZ – The nonprofit Cosanti Foundation has announced two important hires as part of its transition in leadership initiated in March when then CEO and President Patrick McWhortor stepped down from the post he had held for two and a half years.

Earlier this month, The Cosanti Foundation Board of Directors unanimously approved the appointment of [John Walsh](#) as Interim Executive Director, effective immediately and continuing through August 31, 2021. Walsh, a respected, former executive in the retail fashion industry, has most recently established an executive management and consulting business. He has served The Cosanti Foundation as a board member for five years, including leading the board as its chair until his term ended in January 2021. In his role as Interim Executive Director, Walsh will oversee and enhance day-to-day operations as the search for a permanent executive moves forward. He will focus on streamlining and improving The Cosanti Foundation's overall business operations (including those of Cosanti Originals, makers of the highly sought-after and collectible Cosanti Windbells), completing its three-year strategic plan, and adding much-needed capacity in key areas of both The Cosanti Foundation and Cosanti Originals.

The Cosanti Foundation is also pleased to announce the hire of its first-ever Senior Director of Development & Communication, [Kate Bemederfer](#). Bemederfer brings more than 20 years of nonprofit experience, including 10 years as a development and communications professional, to this position. She had most recently been Director of Development and Communications at 1,000 Friends of Oregon, a land-use advocacy nonprofit organization. She had been part of the

six-week Arcosanti workshop program in 2012 and since then, served myriad roles within The Cosanti Foundation over the last nine years, including as a staff member, committee member, and, since last summer, a board member. She will be stepping off The Cosanti Foundation's Board of Directors to assume her new role beginning June 1, 2021. Bemesderfer will be also serving as Interim Chief of Staff, working closely with Walsh and the board to manage The Cosanti Foundation through the current transition until a permanent executive is in place.

The Cosanti Foundation's goals for this interim period include:

- Ensuring growth and stability of staffing and resources
- Aligning internal processes, policies, and procedures
- Undertaking its first-ever annual fiscal audit
- Prioritizing and advancing key projects and programs, including workshops
- Deepening its partnership with the School of Architecture, formerly at Taliesin and now in residence at Arcosanti
- Finalizing and presenting a three-year strategic plan
- Establishing a robust fundraising and philanthropy program
- Revitalizing its digital communications streams
- Building strong relationships among board, staff, residents, and alumni
- Completing the search for a new executive director

As first reported in March, The Cosanti Foundation will be conducting an international search to find its next executive. Says Matteo DiMichele, Chair of The Cosanti Foundation Board of Directors, "It is our priority to find a dynamic leader with a true passion for The Cosanti Foundation's unique and urgent mission: 'To inspire a reimagined urbanism that builds resilient and equitable communities sustainably integrated with the natural world.'"

#### **ABOUT THE COSANTI FOUNDATION**

Since 1965, the nonprofit Cosanti Foundation has been dedicated to influencing the way humankind's built world is created with minimum negative impact to the natural world. Exploring the philosophy of arcology – a portmanteau of "architecture" and "ecology" – through its two culturally-significant sites of Cosanti (in Paradise Valley, AZ) and Arcosanti (in Mayer, AZ), The Cosanti Foundation's important work bridges environmental-stewardship, community-building through urban planning, and sustainable architecture.

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