

Commitment to service motivates Moulton aide

By Thor Jourgensen / The Daily Item | Posted: Wednesday, October 28, 2015 3:00 am

LYNN — Jason Denoncourt's Boston College education instilled in him a belief in "servant leadership" that he has carried into his new job as U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton's economic development director.

The 38-year-old Lexington resident traded his real estate management job with development firm The Gutierrez Company in September for what he called "an opportunity to serve."

Working for Moulton will take Denoncourt across the 6th Congressional District's North Shore communities, but Denoncourt said Lynn will be "a major priority" for economic development strategies he helps Moulton shape into legislation.

"We have to have a really good understanding of the assets in Lynn. We have to understand how companies view Lynn," Denoncourt said.

Denoncourt also holds a master's degree in real estate development from Columbia University. He worked for Gutierrez, specializing in development south and northwest of Boston, for eight years.

"We welcome him and hope he can bring federal resources to help Lynn," said city Economic Development and Industrial Corporation Director James Cowdell.

He said a clear understanding of the Lynn's workforce will help define economic development opportunities Moulton has a hand in shaping.

"The emphasis on opportunity to bring jobs to the area is big," Denoncourt said.

Moulton, in a statement Monday, said Denoncourt's extensive business experience will "help me accomplish my top priority: economic development."

"As impressive as his background is, it is his personal story and commitment to service that make him such a special individual," Moulton said.

On March 6, 2014, Denoncourt drove to Washington, D.C., to visit his brother and newborn nephew, Dylan. Two weeks later, an undetected heart condition killed Devin Denoncourt. A medical test administered by cautious doctors in May 2014 discovered the same condition in Denoncourt. They



Jason Denoncourt

Jason Denoncourt has been settling into his new role as U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton's economic development director.

rushed him into surgery and Denoncourt awoke in a post-surgical suite facing a lengthy recovery.

An experienced triathlete who has competed in Ironman events and marathons, Denoncourt was physically prepared for serious surgery, but the operation's effect on his personal goals and outlook surprised him.

"It made me shift my life priorities," he said.

He returned to work at The Gutierrez Company, helping to complete development of the Keurig headquarters in Burlington, before setting off on a personal discovery journey.

The father of three drew on his wife Rena's counsel and turned to friends and mentors to revisit the concept, taught to him 15 years ago by Jesuit educators, of leading through serving. He crisscrossed the country seeking out people who had previously given him good advice, including Don Stephens, a mentor of Denoncourt's who founded the medical aid organization Mercy Ships.

"He really pointed me to public service," Denoncourt said.

Family commitments kept Denoncourt from volunteering aboard one of Mercy's African ships, but he undertook research for Stephens, and his commitment to Mercy Ships caught Moulton's attention. The pair met, spoke, and Denoncourt said he reached a quick conclusion about the freshman congressman.

"He's inspiring — a true servant leader," Denoncourt said.

Although his office is in Peabody, Denoncourt said he will spend plenty of time in Lynn where he met Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy on Monday who praised Moulton's decision to hire an economic development director.

"Lynn is fortunate to have a congressman like Seth Moulton who understands our needs," Kennedy said.