



Utah business community lauds Huntsman's new post

Grace Leong - Daily Herald | Posted: Friday, May 15, 2009 11:10 pm

News of the pending resignation of Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. caught many in Utah's business community by surprise on Friday.

But several business leaders say Huntsman will be an ideal candidate for the position as ambassador to China.

"In relation to the role of China in the international community, we do know how significant China is in terms of international economics and finance; therefore, whomever is picked as ambassador to China will also be very important," said Kelly Matthews, executive vice president and senior economist with Wells Fargo. "It's a very unique situation for someone who understands the language, is familiar with the culture and has in fact lived in that part of the world."

Matthews praised Huntsman's work as governor.

"Gov. Huntsman has been very effective and helpful in many, many instances for economic development. I'm certain he will be missed," he said.

Taylor Oldroyd, chief executive of the Utah County Association of Realtors and chair of the Utah County Republican Party, said Huntsman has been "rumored to be up for that [ambassador] position for 12 years."

Oldroyd said Huntsman would do a great job and described the appointment as a win-win situation.

Not only will it help improve U.S.-Sino trade and international relations, it'll also be good for the state because his successor, Herbert, is a "seasoned businessperson with an understanding of the government's role," Oldroyd said.

Herbert has his share of supporters in Utah's business community, too.

"Herbert has been in the real-estate industry for more than 30 years. He is a man of integrity, leadership and vision, and those three qualities are important for a governor," said Jon Anderson, partner and principal broker with Commerce CRG.

Herbert was past president of the Utah County Association of Realtors and served 14 years on the Utah County Commission. A Realtor by profession, he is also a veteran of the Utah Army National Guard and leads state efforts concerning homeland security, transportation, water and rural affairs issues.

"He knows the importance of keeping government off the backs of businesspeople and out of their wallets. He knows how to strike a balance between providing government services and allowing businesses to grow and create jobs," Oldroyd said. "One of the reasons why Huntsman is successful is because he's a businessperson who understands how to do recruiting and he brought in a good team. Herbert will be able to move forward with that."