



Kevin Smith

Executive Committee Member



Kevin Smith is Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the Slow Pass Bourbon Company. Prior, Kevin was the Vice President of Kentucky Bourbon Affairs for Beam Suntory. Active in Kentucky's signature bourbon industry since 1989, Kevin has worked for several of the top distilleries in the state helping to build and grow the industry to what it has become today. His primary role during most of his career has been in manufacturing and bourbon production. In the past 8 years Kevin has worked to help shape policy and legislation reform to modernize bourbon regulations and tax codes. In 2019 Kevin was part of the Beam Suntory team that helped establish the James B. Beam Institute for Kentucky Spirits at the University of Kentucky, the bourbon industry's main research and talent development pipeline.

Kevin is currently serving on several boards including the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce (immediate past board chair), Kentucky Chamber Foundation, CHI Saint Joseph Health (executive board), the Legacy Foundation of Kentuckiana, the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) (past chair), the Japan American Society of Kentucky Board (JASK) (past chair), Elizabeth Community and Technical College Foundation (ECTC), and is a former board chair of the Kentucky Distillers Association.

Previously as Vice President / Master Distiller for Maker's Mark Distillery and under the direction of Bill Samuels, Kevin helped Bill create Maker's 46, the company's first innovation since the original product was created by the Samuels family in 1953. In addition to manufacturing, Kevin has also promoted and represented the bourbon industry around the world conducting seminars, tastings, and media interviews for small and large audiences. In 2010, during his time as the Master Distiller at Maker's Mark, Kevin debuted as a judge on the Food Network's Iron Chef America where the secret ingredient was... Bourbon.

Kevin earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Indiana University and is a graduate of Leadership Kentucky class of 2003 and Leadership Louisville 2017. He is married with two children and two grandchildren, and resides in Bardstown, Kentucky, the bourbon capital of the world.

If you are interested in engaging in one of the four committees or learning about specific work groups, please contact KWIB.Projects@ky.gov

Committees: (1) Employer Engagement (2) Education Attainment (3) Workforce Participation (4) Resource Alignment