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Upbeat organizer 'excited to get on with the next step'

BY JOHN GALLAGHER

Just off the exhausting role of organizing the three-day National Summit, Beth Chappell, president and chief executive officer of the Detroit Economic Club, pooh-poohed the idea of taking a vacation break.

"I'm just so energized and excited to get on with the next step," she said.

That's the response Detroiters have come to expect from the woman who is quite possibly the most upbeat personality in town.

Now 51, Chappell took over as head of the venerable Economic Club in 2002, when the organization had no computers. Since then, she has built up the club's infrastructure and membership while maintaining its position as one of the nation's key forums for business and economic discussion.

Chappell "grew up," as she says, within the AT&T organization, serving as region executive here. She also ran her own firm, the Chappell Group, to help companies implement customer-based strategies.

She also spent a year as an executive vice president of Compuware and has served on several corporate boards, including American Axle & Manufacturing.