



EDWARD C. FENNELL/STAFF

Laura Deaton has moved on, as she planned to, after serving for six months as executive director of the YWCA of Greater Charleston.

Director leaves Y 'ready and moving'

BY EDWARD C. FENNELL
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Just as she planned, Laura Deaton has left the local YWCA after just six months at the helm.

Deaton's last day as executive director of the YWCA of Greater Charleston was last Friday. The new executive director will be Amanda Hollinger, the former development director of the YWCA in Asheville, N.C., who will take over this month.

Deaton said when she was handed the reins in April that her specialty was getting struggling nonprofits back on their feet, and she would do so and hand the Y over to a long-term manager. She believes she has recharged and revitalized the Y and left it "stable, ready and moving" and with a clear mission.

Deaton said her future includes consulting work for nonprofit organizations. "I am stepping aside and letting the new person in," she said last week.

During her tenure, Deaton oversaw a survey of the community and its leaders in hopes of determining what the Y should become to best serve the area. More than 700 people responded to the survey, which she said Hollinger will be reviewing and helping the agency to implement.

The Y has been serving tri-

county women and children since 1907 and will celebrate a 100th birthday next year. The agency's priorities have included empowering women and combating racism.

Deaton was hired after longtime Executive Director Christine Jackson retired in 2004. Several interim directors followed, and, according to Deaton and other Y officials, vision suffered, staff left and funds dwindled.

Last summer, the Y found itself suffering a power outage, in both the literal and physical senses. The Coming Street headquarters building lost electricity, air conditioning and heating due to electrical and other problems that cost \$100,000 to fix. Summer day camps and after-school programs had to be curtailed or moved elsewhere.

Deaton said one of her first moves was to secure donations to make building repairs and upgrade the electrical, heating and air-condition systems.

Deaton, who had just moved to Summerville with husband Mark Deaton when the Y sought her help, said working for the agency was a tremendous opportunity. Her consulting firm can be contacted at www.PluffMud-Consulting.com.

Call the YWCA at 722-1644 or visit its Web site at www.ywca-charleston.org.