

Selecting The Right City Manager Is Crucial to Area's Stability

Mayor Marlin Kuykendall and the Prescott City Council will in due course select the man or woman who will serve as our next City Manager. Never has this position been quite so significant to Prescott's future as it is now. The City Manager performs a key role in determining the future course for our city and assists in setting and achieving our community goals. Our City government must use this opportunity to select an applicant that can work with regional leaders in both the public *and* private sectors to broaden our economic base and lead us out of our current economic downturn.

The Mayor and council will also decide how to go about finding our next City Manager. Several possibilities exist. They could promote the acting City Manager to a permanent position, hire a professional firm to conduct a nation-wide search, or form a committee of local citizens to conduct a search. The last option seems most appropriate since it would be thorough and affordable. If the City chooses this route, the key will be to select committee members with knowledge of the Manager's duties and a comprehensive understanding of the critical issues facing our region.

Prescott needs a Manager who understands our serious water issues and possesses the vision to see that our future requires a secure and reliable water supply, such as a pipeline from the Big Chino aquifer. Achieving this goal will provide water for our region and help to achieve safe yield.

Our new Manager must understand that success in economic development increases exponentially when regional stakeholders unify their efforts to attract desirable businesses. These stakeholders include the Quad-Cities municipalities and Chambers of Commerce, Yavapai County, the Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe, school districts, colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, developers, and private

citizens. Collaborations between multiple public and private entities can provide benefits far greater than what can be realized by a single party acting alone.

In the mid-1990's, the City of Prescott partnered with Yavapai County, our local YMCA, and private donors to build a quality indoor swimming facility. The construction of our City skate park next to Ken Lindley Field came to fruition due to the efforts and resources of the City, a private construction company, and individual donors. Partnerships of this nature can create benefits that far exceed the original investment of time and money. Other communities in our region understand this also.

Several years ago the Town of Prescott Valley successfully joined forces with the Prescott Valley Economic Development Foundation and a group of local investors to bring Lockheed Martin to our region. Lockheed now employs over 200 people with an annual payroll of \$16,000,000.

Currently the City of Prescott is assisting the Prescott Chamber of Commerce with a new Economic Development mission that will hopefully bring quality jobs. Our Chamber will hopefully join with other economic development organizations to expand their scope beyond the border of our City. The efforts of our local communities will be more beneficial to our residents when regional stakeholders cooperate and share the goal of bringing quality businesses, and jobs, to central Yavapai County.

In addition to embracing regional cooperation, our new Manager should understand that City staff serves the citizens, not the other way around. If we wish to continue to attract new businesses like Trader Joe's, we must streamline bureaucratic processes so projects can be approved by the various departments and move forward without needless costly delays. The goal should be to make City services more user friendly with a staff dedicated to finding ways to help individuals and businesses meet the City's requirements.

Our new City Manager will hopefully review City departments with an eye toward privatizing services that can be better accomplished by private enterprise.

Our region boasts several local trash collection companies with specific knowledge and resources to collect trash more efficiently and at a lower cost. Why not explore the possibility of privatizing City trash collection?

The Manager's position requires constant attention to each of the City's departments, an acute awareness of potential problems, and the drive to sustain our unique character and heritage. Our new City Manager should help us resolve our water issues, vigorously support a regional economic development effort, and direct City staff to be more responsive. The Mayor and City Council must use this opportunity to engage citizens and the business sector in finding the right individual to serve as our new City Manager.

Contributed by Scott Helfinstine, CPA
Treasurer, Central Arizona Partnership

The Central Arizona Partnership was established by citizens with a long-standing history and commitment to our area. Our mission is to advocate responsible growth, and promote a balance of economic and ecological sustainability in Central Arizona. CAP supports judicious management of natural resources, with truthful examination and debate on matters of public importance relative to growth in the region. CAP strives to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for all.