City of Destin City Manager

(population 12,300)

First-time visitors to Destin are still discovering what brings people back to Destin's harbor and shores year after year... the beautiful white sandy beaches, emerald green waters, friendly atmosphere, superb dining and, of course, fishing in the "World's Luckiest Fishing Village." Destin is no longer a small fishing village, but a resort destination for spring breakers, summer vacationers, and snowbirds wishing to escape harsh winters.

The 100 Fathom curve draws closer to Destin than any other spot in Florida and, as a result, deep-sea bottom fishing is a local specialty. Red snapper, grouper, triggerfish, scamp, and amberjack are plentiful. Charter boats troll near the coast, finding cobia, black fin tuna, king mackerel, bluefish, barracuda, and Spanish mackerel. Far offshore, anglers can find white and blue marlin, wahoo, and sailfish. More than one hundred charter and party boats call Destin home, and range in size from six passenger capacity to ones that can handle more than 100 anglers. Other water activities include snorkeling and diving, parasailing and relaxing aboard a sunset cruise on a glass bottom boat or a high-speed racer. Dolphins can be watched swimming in the wake of a sightseeing excursion. The Destin harbor is a highlight and each day residents and visitors watch the catch being brought in along our docks. Destin recently scored in the top spot in Boating magazine's Top Best Places to Live and Boat. This award considered livability, public access, convenience and also relaxing getaways.

Of course, Destin has other, non-water recreational activities. For example, Business Week magazine listed Destin as one of the 18 best new golf places in the country to retire. Southern Accents magazine's readers named Destin the number eight golf destination in its second annual Great Escapes Reader Travel Awards. Beyond recreational activities, the Milken Institute listed the area as its top Best Performing City in 2005 for small metros and in May the Mayor had the pleasure of presenting Council & Staff with the Northwest Florida League of Cities 2011 Community of Excellence Award for outstanding commitment to its citizens and community (populations 10 – 20 thousand).

But what makes Destin unique is its people – it is in many ways a small town where neighbors help neighbors and that makes it a great place to live. It is a traditional community where family values matter. The people are friendly, reasonably

affluent, professional, sophisticated, well educated and they want to preserve their heritage. Area schools are among the best in the state. Crime is low and the lifestyle is relaxed. Housing prices have reverted to reasonable levels and the community has four seasons. Good Air service is provided through nearby Northwest Florida Regional Airport. Among the major air carriers, American Eagle Continental, Delta and U.S. Airways have regular flights. Additionally, Vision Airlines, a new low cost carrier, provides limited service at a very reasonable price. All in all, Destin is a diverse community that everyone can call home.

HISTORY

Destin's historical heritage dates back to the early seventh century A.D. when the first American Indians settled in the area. Spanish explorers began to arrive in the late 1530s. At the time, the Florida Panhandle was home to the Apalachee tribe. Don Francisco Tapia was commissioned to survey the Florida coast and in 1693, drew the first known map of East Pass and its shores.

Destin traces its more recent history to a fisherman, Captain Leonard Destin, who relocated to the area from New London, Connecticut in about 1845. Captain Destin pioneered the fishing industry and the fishermen of that era fished close to the shore with seine nets from small boats which they operated with oars.

Over the next 140 years, the community grew from a small fishing village into a major tourist destination. With that growth came the need for local governmental structure and the community incorporated in 1984. The people simply wanted to control their own destiny, particularly with respect to development.

While the community has continued to evolve, it maintains its heritage as a well regarded vacation destination and as a premier fishing community. Destin has the largest and most elaborately equipped charter fishing fleet in the State of Florida.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Destin has a permanent population of 12,305 per the 2010 census. In terms of age, it is relatively evenly spread. 27% were under 25, 28% between 25 and 45, 30% between 45 and 65 and the remaining 15% were over 65. While the 2010 data has not been released for other categories, it is not likely to differ significantly from the 2000 data. Then 92% of the population was White, 2% Asian, 1% Black and the

remaining 4% were some other race or two or more races. Hispanics made up just under 8% of the population. The City had almost 13,000 housing units of which approximately 30% were owner occupied. Estimated 2009 per capita income was \$41,990 and median household income was \$62,857.

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Destin covers 8.2 square miles and is located in Florida's Panhandle on a peninsula separating the Gulf of Mexico from Choctawhatchee Bay. Nearby cities are Fort Walton Beach and Niceville. Approximately 50 miles east of Panama City and Pensacola to the west. Montgomery, AL., lies 170 miles north, Tallahassee, FL 160 miles east and New Orleans 250 miles west. Atlanta is 300 miles northeast, Jacksonville, FL, 300 miles east and Tampa, FL, 380 miles southeast by road.

Destin has a warm humid subtropical climate and experiences four distinct seasons. The summers are hot and humid and generally last from late May to mid-September. Spring and autumn are generally warm. Winters are mild and last from December to late February. Overall, the area is wet, averaging almost 70 inches of rain annually.

Climate data for Destin

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °F	61	65	71	78	84	90	91	91	88	80	72	64	77.9
Average low °F	37	40	46	51	60	68	71	71	66	54	46	39	54.1
Precipitation inches (mm)	5.80	5.39	6.52	4.26	4.32	6.08	9.40	6.91	6.72	4.53	4.70	4.57	69.20

Source: The Weather Channel

COMMERCE

Historically, Destin's economy has been driven by fishing, tourism and development. While Eglin Air Force Base is a nearby source of employment, it lies outside the City's boundaries. With the exception of ResortQuest International (over 1,000 employees), businesses within the city limits are relatively small. The eight largest employers after ResortQuest have between 100 and 250 employees and are: A.J.'s Seafood and Oyster House, Crab Trap, Cracker Barrel, Destin Healthcare and Rehabilitation, Harbor Docks (a restaurant), Hey Baby Charter Boat,

Holiday Inn, and the Lucky Snapper Grill and Bar.

THE GOVERNMENT

Destin is governed by a Mayor and seven Council Members who serve in a voluntary capacity. All are elected at large and to staggered, four year terms. Elections take place in March of even numbered years and members may not serve more than two consecutive terms. The Mayor votes only in the case of a tie. The relationship between the City's elected officials is characterized as one of mutual respect and the Council operates cohesively. That is not to say that they agree on everything. In fact debate can be quite spirited although it does not become personal. The Council Members respect the staff.

The City is progressive and conducts an annual strategic planning session which establishes the City's goals and objectives for the coming year. The manager is then evaluated on whether or not these goals are met. The City also believes strongly in continuous quality improvement and is working towards attaining Florida's Sterling Award (the national equivalent is the Baldrige Award). As a result, over the past few years, Destin has developed into a high performance municipal government.

The key City departments are: City Manager, (IT/HR/Grants, Projects & Quality), Community Development, Public Services (Engineer / Project Manager / Maintenance), Recreation, Library, Finance and City Clerk. Independent authorities provide Fire/Rescue and utility services. Contracted services include police (from the County Sheriff) and sanitation (Waste Management). The City also has two Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs). Overall, the City's staff works well together, particularly in a crisis.

Destin's government is very lean. Its total budget is approximately \$14 million and its general fund budget is just over \$8 million. The City has 65 full-time employees and 14 part-time. It also utilizes 14 part-time temporary employees. Since FY 2006, the FTE count has been reduced from 94.5 to 78.5. The largest single group of employees is in Recreation with 21 employees. None of the City's employees are represented by a union.

THE ISSUES

For a small city providing a relatively limited range of services and lying outside a

major metropolitan area, Destin is surprisingly complex. At this point, the most significant issue is financial. The City has a two mill cap on property taxes and the rate is presently at 1.455. No one wants to raise the tax rate but after several years of declining property values, the City may not have any more rabbits to pull out of the hat. The situation is complicated by the fact that the City borrowed money through its CRAs to make improvements when the real estate market was at its peak. Of the two CRAs, the Town Center currently requires funding for its debt service from the general revenue fund. A second issue is traffic. Highway 98 is the major coastal thoroughfare and runs through the heart of the City. alternative roads presently exist. The City has purchased almost all the land necessary for a bypass. A few pieces remain to be acquired and they will not be inexpensive. Funding needs to be found to build the road. Beach ownership and property rights is another contentious issue. Unfortunately, the property owners fear non-owners will visit and spoil their beach views and their beach. As a result, the City has been involved in virtually continuous property rights litigation over the past ten years. While the City has prevailed in each case, it has been costly and time consuming. Since the City is nearly built out, redevelopment provides the primary opportunity for new revenues. While the City has planned a number of projects to improve the infrastructure (including a boardwalk), some are now stymied by the lack of funds. Finally, the City is dependent on fishing as a magnet for tourists. Environmental regulation has, from time to time, limited what can be caught and by whom. Fishermen often look to the City to be their voice in dealing with other governmental entities.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

First and foremost, Destin is looking for a leader, not just a manager. The ideal candidate will be a strategic thinker who understands the present is important but that the future is critical. The manager will anticipate the ramifications of actions taken today as they relate and impact upon the future. Planning for what's to come can make a huge difference in how the City fares. The individual will spend time in the community, with the elected officials and with staff, all the while listening and understanding and then develop plans that will take the City to the next level. He/She will be open-minded, creative, honest, energetic, and customer service oriented with outstanding people skills. The customer is not always right but the resident does deserve outstanding customer service and a good explanation. The manager will also be proactive and achievement-oriented yet patient with a sense of humor. In local government it sometimes takes time to build consensus and the manager will know how to do that. The individual will also be an outstanding communicator. She/he will be as comfortable speaking with the day laborer as with

the CEO. The manager will set high expectations for his/her staff and hold them accountable. Negotiation skills are also important. While the City does not have unions, it is continuously interacting with other governments - local, regional, state and federal. As noted, the City also has its legal challenges and the manager will need to have a command of the law and legal process. The individual will also have an appreciation for technology and how it can maximize the limited resources the City has. He/She will have expertise in implementing quality management for high performance organizations. Ideally the manager will have experience with the Sterling and/or National Baldrige performance models. The City has spent a great deal of time and effort on building an organization that is organized around these principles and it does not want to go backwards. Hence, knowledge of process improvement is important as is the ability to find fact-based solutions and the ability to measure results. A sense of self and inner strength will be critical. It is not uncommon for the City and the manager to be challenged by people who feel strongly about their position. To say no to them is not always simple and easy. Further, the individual will recognize that the manager's job is to be not just a conduit between the elected officials and staff but also to help prioritize work. Destin is a family oriented government. Finally, the individual will hire good people, mentor them and have an appreciation for women and minorities. Everyone will be equal in the manager's eyes.

In terms of knowledge, the manager will have a good command of budget and finance and be fiscally conservative. He/she must be able to deal effectively with the local, regional and national press and should be knowledgeable of Florida law. Experience resolving issues with other levels of government is a plus. He/She should also have knowledge of coastal communities (particularly a fishing community), redevelopment, and tourism. A bachelor's degree in public administration or closely related field is required and a master's degree preferred. Five years experience as a city or county manager or assistant manager is also required. Those with 10 years as a director or equivalent public/private sector position will be considered. Experience in a Florida local government is highly desirable.

THE CURRENT CITY MANAGER

The current manager is leaving after seven years to become the County Administrator of neighboring Walton County.

COMPENSATION

The salary range is from \$\$90,000 - \$125,000, plus very good benefits.

RESIDENCY

The City Manager is required to live within the City's boundaries within six months of hire.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Florida's public records act, once an application is submitted, it is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, we generally are not asked to divulge applicant names until after the closing date. We do expect some media coverage as the search progresses.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your resume to Recruit23@cb-asso.com by June 24, 2011. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between June 25th and August 2nd. Interviews will be held on August 12th and 13th with a selection shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Destin is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages minorities and women to apply. Destin values its small town/neighborhood feel and is committed to serving its residents, visitors, and businesses. A veteran's preference will be awarded as applicable under State and Federal law.