



Executive Director Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans Apply by October 25, 2013

When most people think of New Orleans, they think of Mardi Gras, Bourbon Street and the French Quarter. That is part of New Orleans – but really only a very small part. Much more important is the City's rich history, its cultural heritage and its small town feel. It is a family oriented community, a place where outsiders are welcome, where neighbors know their neighbors and where neighbors help neighbors.

New Orleans is a city reborn. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused massive devastation, but it also opened the path to a very bright future. The people who came back after Katrina are the best of the best, people who treasure their

community and want to not just rebuild it, but make it an example of continuing resiliency to the world, an example that others will strive to emulate. Now, a new opportunity has presented itself, as the longtime Executive Director of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (hereafter S&WB) is retiring.

Surrounded by Lake Pontchartrain on the north, Lake Borgne on the east, and the Gulf of Mexico on the south and west, New Orleans is a port city that covers 350 square miles. The Mississippi River and the Interstate Highway System are the main thoroughfares that provide water and land-based transit throughout the region.

In New Orleans, there are sights to see, food to try, music to listen to, people to meet and culture to enjoy. Perhaps the best-known attraction of New Orleans is the City's oldest neighborhood, the French Quarter. At the Quarter's entrance lies Jackson Square, which was originally the parade grounds during the French occupation. It is now, a large, gated park that is home to beautiful floral displays, historical memorials, and a life-sized statue of a mounted Andrew Jackson, hero of the Battle of New Orleans. Just outside the park lie several historical buildings, including the St. Louis Cathedral, a Catholic Basilica designated by Pope Paul VI. It is situated between the Cabildo, the City's original City Hall (currently a historical museum), which fronts Jackson Square overlooking the Mississippi River, and the Presbytere, the original residence for the priests. Ironically, Bourbon Street, a popular tourist hotspot, is a stone's throw away.

For the music aficionados, few cities have more to offer than New Orleans. Steeped in its famed tradition of jazz and the blues, the City is home to current and former musical legends including Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton. The City houses many different music clubs, and has several annual festivals including the Jazz and Heritage Festival, Satchmo SummerFest and the Voodoo Music Experience.

Speaking of the people, you will rarely find a friendlier, more welcoming group in any major city. New Orleans is also home to one of the most diverse populations in the continental United States, and people from all walks of life have come together in a true "melting pot" to create one cohesive community. Originally French, the City is also populated by peoples from the Caribbean, the United States, Latin America, and many other locations. Better yet, they typically welcome outsiders with open arms. An interesting historical tidbit is that when the Americans began to move to New Orleans, the strip of ground between where they lived and where the French lived was called the neutral ground. Now the term is used to describe the medians in roadways.

Beyond that, the culture of New Orleans is simply fantastic. While the famed Mardi Gras festival is well known throughout the world, most people are only aware of the glitz seen on the evening news. It is so much more than that. It is a family event that lasts two weeks, where three or four parades may be going on simultaneously in different parts of the City. One resident described it as a combination of a family picnic, the 4th of July, and Halloween, but on steroids.

Of course, the City has much, much more to offer. For the sports fan, the NFL's World Champion Saints and the NBA's Pelicans are the prominent professional teams in the area, while the Zephyrs (Minor League Baseball), Voodoo (Arena League Football), and Jesters (National Premier Soccer League) also call the City home. For the art enthusiast, the New Orleans Museum of Art is located in New Orleans City Park. However, more importantly are the Art Districts spread throughout the City where galleries, some of which are owned by local artists, create a cultural street party atmosphere. In fact, the S&WB's Main Building is located in the Warehouse Art District. Additionally, the performing arts are strong here, much to the delight of those who enjoy the theater.

While many people know the outside perception of New Orleans as somewhat of a party city, few know the family friendly environment that truly exists within the City limits. For all the blending of different cultures and peoples, the City is not a transitional city. Rather, it is a generational city where family roots stretch back decades and even centuries. The City also offers a dizzying array of services and amenities that help families grow, including an excellent school system in which 70% of the schools are charter schools, a park system that offers many attractions and opportunities for family activities, and of course, the water. All in all, New Orleans is a surprisingly wonderful place to raise a family.

Finally, perhaps the most attractive part of New Orleans is what it has become in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. While the disaster side of the story has been well publicized, the rebirth process and what has occurred since the storm has not. It is, simply put, the Renaissance of New Orleans. The City has rebuilt itself, and in many senses, it has done it in a way that is so much better than before. An entrepreneurial spirit has developed in the City, as investors and new business enterprises have rushed in to fill the void that was left in the wake of the hurricane. Young "Intellectual Immigrants" have flocked to the City, initially for altruistic purposes of volunteering to help a city in distress. Having fallen in love with New Orleans, however, many have stayed, and as a result New Orleans now has the highest per capita education rate for people 20-35 years of age in the country. Finally, while the hurricane caused a great deal of destruction, an





unbreakable bond of community was created by the people who weathered the storm and returned.

All and all, the personal opportunities alone make the Executive Director's position an excellent opportunity, but wait until we tell you about the professional opportunities that will be discussed hereafter. We invite you to apply!

#### History

The story of New Orleans is about water. Its recorded history began with early European trappers and traders who started to arrive around 1690. The settlement that later became the City of New Orleans was founded by the French in 1718 at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Although almost half of the present day city is below sea level, its original footprint was chosen because it was of greater elevation than much of the surrounding tidal plain. That helped minimize the flooding during the wet season. From its relatively early days, New Orleans was a port city and a center of commerce – a place where continental commerce met global commerce.

In 1762, the area was ceded to Spanish control following the Seven Years' War. Between 1788 and 1794, a series of fires destroyed nearly 1,000 buildings in the City. Without a municipal water supply, the greater part of the City burned to the ground. Ironically, over 300 billion gallons of water per day were pouring down the Mississippi less than two blocks from the fires.

In 1800, the French resumed control, and three short years later, in order to raise funds for his military campaigns, Napoleon sold the area to the United States as part of the famed Louisiana Purchase. As time passed, the Mississippi became an increasingly important trade route and New Orleans became an economic hub. At the same time, a sugar industry was developing to augment the port.

As a result of its unusual topography, the City was subject to periodic flooding from the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, as well as frequent inundation from the high-intensity rainfall. Often, after the floodings, inhabitants were forced to wade through the streets or be rowed in small boats to take care of their daily business. In the late 1800s the daily newspapers carried illustrations showing the main business section flooded with two to three feet of water as residents waded and rowed through the streets. It was not uncommon for such regular flooding to last for a week, and often after only a moderate rainfall.

Water for drinking or general use was either rainwater collected and stored in large cisterns, or taken from the river and allowed to settle in large earthenware jars. At this time, there were no purification or sterilization procedures.

A sewage collection and disposal system was also non-existent. Human waste was disposed of in the open pit privy, while household wastes found their way into open gutters. These conditions were a recipe for disaster. The City fell victim to epidemics of typhoid fever, yellow fever, cholera, and other diseases (which decimated the population) at regular intervals.

By 1893, it had become apparent to local leaders that the City's future growth would depend on their ability to keep New Orleans drained and dry, to provide an adequate supply of clean water for drinking and fire protection, and to provide a properly constructed and maintained sanitary sewage system. As such, planning for the three systems began that year.

In 1896, the New Orleans Drainage Commission was organized to carry out a master drainage plan that had been developed for the City. Three years later, in 1899, the Sewerage and Water Board (S&WB) was authorized by the Louisiana Legislature to furnish, construct, operate, and maintain a water treatment and distribution system and a sanitary sewage system for New Orleans. In 1903, the Drainage Commission was merged with the S&WB in order to consolidate the drainage, water, and sewage programs under one agency for more efficient operations. This combined organization retained the title Sewerage and Water Board, and remains as such today.

Once formally organized, the S&WB set out to fulfill its goals. By 1915, \$27,500,000 had been



spent on the construction of water, sewage, and drainage facilities, as well as power systems to run them. In planning the system, the S&WB brought experts from around the country, one of which was Thomas Edison. He studied the problems and recommended 25 cycle power be used to power the equipment. The Board accepted his recommendation, and over the years, that decision has served the system well – fewer cycles led to less wear and tear on the pumps.

Such extensive construction was a bold step for a city at that time. Present day construction costs are more than forty times those of the early 1900s. At current prices, such a program could amount to billions of dollars. Furthermore, this monumental effort was financed by a population of far less than one half that of present-day New Orleans.

The ensuing decades brought growth and maturity to the S&WB

until 2005, when Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans and put the Board at the heart of the worst engineering disaster since Chernobyl. When the floodwalls and levees constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers failed, 80% of the City flooded and over 200,000 homes and businesses were destroyed. Entire neighborhoods were decimated and much of the City remained under 10 feet of water. Virtually the City's entire population was evacuated. It then fell upon the S&WB to get the water out of the City and to restore regular water and sewer service.

As such, the S&WB performed magnificently, or more accurately, heroically - in spite of the fact that 80% of its employees who worked on the recovery had lost their homes. The spirit of dedication of these employees at all levels of position, was unmatched. Recognizing the harm that could result if it delayed, the S&WB's leadership took action. It delegated authority to the lowest possible levels and gave its employees one basic instruction: "Do whatever it takes to get the water out of the City as quickly as possible. Do not wait for permission, just act." It would be a herculean task for the S&WB. Federal authorities estimated it would take months to clear the water from the City. The few pumps that could be placed on line would certainly be ruined if they were operated without painstakingly cleaning them to eliminate the corrosive effects of being submerged in the brackish water. The decision was made - run them until they burn. Following the lead of its Executive Director, these dedicated employees worked 24/7 to bring the City back. The result? The City was dry in 11 days, not months as predicted by the Federal authorities, but the S&WB was left in shambles. With almost all of its assets destroyed or damaged, it was faced with the task of rebuilding itself. Since Katrina, almost \$2 billion, mostly of Federal funds which were difficult to garner, has been spent rebuilding the water, wastewater and stormwater systems.

New Orleans today is smaller (the population dropped from 484,000 in 2005 to its current 369,000) but is on an upward trend. In fact, in some ways, the returning population surpasses the vibrancy of the previous population. The reason is that the current residents have a true passion for their community, a passion you will not find in many other places. In the words of retiring S&WB Executive Director Marcia St. Martin, "New Orleans is not a victim of a natural disaster, but instead is a poster child for recovery!"

#### Demographics

New Orleans's population's median age is slightly under the national average, 34.6 as opposed to 37.2. The age breakdown is found in Table I:

Age Bracket	Percent					
Under 10	12.1 %					
10 to 20	12.5 %					
20 to 30	18.8 %					
30 to 40	13.3 %					
40 to 50	13.1 %					
50 to 60	14.0 %					
60 to 708	.9 %					
70 +	7.3 %					

Table I: Population by Age

Source: U.S. Census

In terms of race, the population is 33.0% Caucasian, 60% African American, 3% Asian American, with the remainder of the population being made up of other races or more than one race. People of Hispanic or Latino origin make up approximately 5% of the population.

Per the 2010 census, the median household income is \$37,325, while the mean is \$59,780. The unemployment rate is 9%. 11% of the population has not graduated high school, 25.8% have a high school degree, 21.6% have finished some college, 4.2% have an Associate's degree, 18.5% have a Bachelor's degree, and 13.9% have completed graduate work.

#### Geography

Overall, New Orleans covers 350 square miles. Its waterfront stretches miles in three directions and the City is partly peninsular. The heart of the City spreads around a curve of the Mississippi River — source of the nickname "Crescent City"— while edging Lake Pontchartrain on the north. Lake Pontchartrain connects to Lake Borgne, providing a broad opening to the Gulf of Mexico. Lakes, marshlands, and bayous extend from the City in all directions.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average High °F	62.1	65.4	71.8	78.2	85.2	89.5	91.2	91.2	87.5	80.0	71.8	64.4	78.2
Average Low °F	44.7	48.0	53.5	60.0	68.1	73.5	75.3	75.3	72.0	62.6	53.5	46.9	61.1
Precipitation Inches	5.1	5.3	4.5	4.6	4.6	8.0	6.0	6.1	5.1	3.6	4.5	5.3	62.7

New Orleans is located in one of the lowest spots in the United States. Almost half of the City is below sea level, and it continues to sink, by up to an inch a year. Upstream dams and levees built to tame Mississippi River floods and ease shipping have starved the delta downstream of sediments and nutrients, causing wetlands that once buffered the City against storm-driven seas to sink beneath the waves. Louisiana has lost 1,900 square miles of coastal lands since the 1930s, putting the City that much closer to the open Gulf.

#### Climate

New Orleans is classified as having a humid subtropical climate. A climate chart can be seen above in Table II.

While Hurricane Katrina is the most extreme storm in New Orleans' history, major storms strike the area with some regularity. Between 1851 and 2004, Louisiana was hit by 49 hurricanes. In addition, eighteen with Saffir-Simpson ratings of Category 3 or above have struck the state. On average, one major storm crosses within 100 nautical miles of New Orleans every decade. The good news is that New Orleans is built to withstand these events much the same way northern cities are built to withstand major weather events such as blizzards.

# Commerce

The New Orleans region is home to two of the largest and busiest ports in the world, and metropolitan New Orleans is a center of the maritime industry. The Port of New Orleans is the 5th-largest port in the United States based on volume of cargo handled, second-largest in the state after the Port of South Louisiana (also located in the New Orleans area), and 12th-largest in the U.S., based on value of cargo. The Port of South Louisiana is the world's busiest in terms of bulk tonnage. The region accounts for a significant portion of the nation's oil refining and Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

petrochemical production and serves as a white collar corporate base for onshore and offshore petroleum and natural gas production.

New Orleans is a center for higher learning, with over 50,000 students enrolled in the region's two- and four-year degree-granting institutions. Metropolitan New Orleans is a major regional hub for the health care industry and boasts a small, globally competitive manufacturing sector.

The City of New Orleans possesses a rapidly growing, entrepreneurial creative industries sector, and is, of course, renowned for its cultural tourism. Perhaps more visible than any other sector, New Orleans' tourist and convention industry was a \$5.5 billion juggernaut that accounted for 40 percent of New Orleans' tax revenues in the middle of the last decade. In 2004 the hospitality industry employed 85,000 people, making it New Orleans' top economic sector as measured by employment totals.

# The Government

New Orleans has a Mayor-Council form of government and is the result of a merger of the City of New Orleans and Orleans Parish. The City Council consists of seven members, five who are elected by district, and two atlarge members. The current Mayor took office on May 10, 2010 and serves a four-year term. Both the Council and the Mayor are limited to two consecutive terms. New Orleans' government is largely centralized in the City Council and Mayor's office, but it maintains a number of relics from earlier systems when various sections of the City ran much of their affairs separately. It is a full-service government.

## The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans

The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (S&WB) has been a model agency since its creation. In fact, when

the Dutch decided to drain the Zuider Zee, their model was New Orleans, and much of the initial equipment that they purchased came from New Orleans.

The S&WB is a quasi-City/State entity. It is an unattached board of the City Government and was created as a State entity by the State Legislature. However, the Mayor is also President of the S&WB. The Board is authorized to administer construction, maintenance, and operation of the Water, Sewer and Drainage Systems for the City of New Orleans. The S&WB also provides some services to neighboring parishes.

The organization currently has a 13-member governing board that consists of the Mayor, three Council Members (one of which must be an at-large member), two members of the Board of Liquidation, City Debt, and seven citizen members appointed by the Mayor. They have nine-year overlapping terms. Quite a bit of its work is fully considered in subcommittees of the S&WB. With a few limited exceptions, meetings of the Board and its committees are open to the public. The S&WB is an impressive group, composed of very talented and accomplished individuals. They work well together and have a high degree of respect for the S&WB staff.



On October 19, 2013, after the publication of this material but before the closing date for this position, the voters will decide if they wish to change the S&WB's composition and the manner in which members are appointed. Specifically, if the referendum passes, the S&WB's size will be reduced from 13 members to 11. The seats set aside for Council Members will be eliminated. The seats for the Mayor and two Board of Liquidation members will remain. A blue ribbon committee of business and academia will recommend three individuals for each of the eight remaining seats to the Mayor. The Mayor will then be required to select one of the three, who must be confirmed by the City Council.

The Executive Director serves at the pleasure of the governing Board and oversees the day-to-day operations of the S&WB. That includes all of the drinking water, wastewater and drainage activities in Orleans Parish, as well as the power systems to support them. It also has some modest activities in neighboring parishes.

The S&WB serves roughly 370,000 people and has approximately 1,000 employees. In terms of stormwater, S&WB operates 118 pumps with a pumping capacity (CPS) of 50,291. For example, it could fill the Superdome with water in 45 seconds. The S&WB typically treats 140 million gallons per day (mgd) of water and has a capacity of 270 mgd. None of the employees are represented by a union. These employees however are governed by the rules and regulations of City Civil Service.

The Utility's operating budget is \$138.7 million. \$63.6 million comes from water revenues and \$75.1 million from wastewater. Drainage revenues come from ad valorem taxes of \$42.0 million. The S&WB also has a 10-year \$3.6 billion capital program.

## The Opportunities and Challenges

This Executive Director position is an exquisite opportunity that rarely comes open but also comes with some challenges.

First and foremost, you cannot talk about New Orleans without talking about water. The City was not founded as a below sea level city. However, as the City expanded to become a major metropolitan center, the land surrounding its original footprint was below sea level. The result is an intricate pumping system is required to remove the water. Other approaches to living with the water have been the source of discussions between the S&WB and the community. Considering the efforts of the present day urban conditions, it is clear that water needs to be managed holistically, managing elevation, location and risk – it cannot simply be pumped out of the way. Thus, there are ongoing discussions concerning managing the water that lies in, under and around New Orleans, and doing so in creative ways that improve rather than worsen the situation.

The second challenge is funding. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina brought over \$2 billion in funding to rehabilitate the water, wastewater and stormwater systems. Still more needs to be done in the recovery effort. Furthermore, it was well documented before Katrina that the infrastructure was in dire need of funds to rebuild it. For example, 49% of the water produced is lost through the system. Additionally, much of the S&WB's information technology must also be upgraded. Until recently, there had been no meaningful rate increases in over 20 years. However, faced with the infrastructure issues plaguing the S&WB, in November 2012 the City Council passed a package that will increase the rates 10% per year for the next eight years. That will help, but the magnitude of what needs to be addressed is such that these increases will not be enough.

Furthermore, the S&WB's governing board has immense respect for the organization and the staff it oversees. Keeping best practices in mind, the Executive Director will need to consider the overall mission of the organization in analyzing staffing needs and in reviewing efficiency. Planning for the future workforce will be very important and challenging. 30% of the current workforce can retire within the next five years. Coupled with that, the changes in technology mean that the S&WB must give consideration to the skill sets employees need to meet these challenges.

Finding alternative revenue sources is also a challenge and an opportunity. The S&WB has,





as noted, a great deal of unused treatment capacity both in terms of water and wastewater, and that will only grow as the percentage of lost water and the amount of infiltration into the sewage lines are reduced. One possibility is to find new markets to sell some or both of those services and/or products.

A smaller but significant issue is that in terms of stormwater, the S&WB is responsible for only the canals and the drainage pipes that are 36" in diameter or larger. The City's Department of Public Works (DPW) controls the smaller pipes and street catch basins. That has created some difficult coordination issues, and since DPW has fewer resources than the S&WB, the correction of issues with smaller pipes can take a very long time. In the meantime, much of the public is under the mistaken impression that the S&WB is responsible for the pools of standing water that result from issues with the city street catch basins.

Finally, maintaining and enhancing the organization's image will be important. While it is widely recognized for its efforts after Hurricane Katrina, S&WB has some issues which need to be addressed. It is subject to a wastewater Consent Decree with the Department of Justice and United States Environmental Protection Agency for the deferred maintenance as a result of years of underfunding. Boil-water notices occur infrequently, but even one brings attention to the organization. Finally, it is important with the number of capital projects coming online in the next few years that the integrity of the award process based on merit is maintained.

## The Ideal Candidate

The S&WB is looking for an outstanding professional who is both a great leader and a great manager. The individual will partner with the S&WB's Board of Directors to take the organization to the next level. The organization is faced with tremendous challenges and opportunities, so being able to see over the horizon and create a vision for the future will be important. The individual will be an ambassador for the S&WB and be someone who is confident, bold, tenacious, high-energy, positive and proactive. He or she will have a high degree of integrity as well as the backbone to diplomatically stand up to political pressure and maintain a consistent approach. The individual will be an excellent communicator; that is, someone who listens and who is equally comfortable communicating with people from all walks of life. It will be important that the next Director communicates in a way that inspires the public's trust. The individual will place a high degree of importance on customer service and not settle for second best in that area.

While the next Executive Director will understand the importance of the day-to-day, he or she will not let it divert his or her attention from the need to plan for the long term and from accomplishing what needs to be done to ensure the organization's long-term success. The individual will be a strategic thinker, a doer, and creative. In addition, he or she will be analytical and take a hard look at how the S&WB does business – always seeking better ways.

Being able to make timely and sound decisions under a great deal of pressure (such as during a hurricane) is an absolute must. While the next manager will be the CEO overseeing the day-to-day operations, she or he will not spend all day in the office. Rather, the individual will be in the community and intensely familiar with its issues and concerns. Expect to work hard. This is not a 9 to 5 job.

The next Executive Director will be comfortable with and appreciate diversity. The individual will be sensitive to race and culture and will treat everyone equally. He or she will understand politics, and will not only understand that there are many interest groups and constituencies with differing agendas, but will be able to navigate among these groups. The Executive Director will do what is right and will not buckle to pressure from one group or another, whether it is the old guard, new guard, local press or a special interest group. He or she will understand the importance of history, respect the past, and use it as a foundation for moving forward.

The individual will recognize that the existing staff is outstanding and will inspire, manage, delegate and mentor that staff. The next Director, while innovative, will recognize and value the existing intellectual property. He or she will also have high expectations for the staff and set high standards. The Executive Director will expect results and hold the staff accountable for its work.

While it is not imperative that the individual have a degree in engineering, it will be important that he or

she grasp the essentials and the intricacies of operating a water/sewer and stormwater utility that generates its own power. It will also be important to understand the nuances of hydrology. As noted previously, New Orleans' future lies in managing its water. It also lies in managing its financial resources, so a background in that area is critical. Knowledge of best practices is important.

Skill with media and intergovernmental relations is a must. The Executive Director frequently speaks to the media, and therefore will have commensurate communication skills. Further, the S&WB interacts with many players at the local, state, regional and federal (such as senators, congressmen and the Army Corps of Engineers). Hence the next Executive Director will need to know how to work across agency lines and build consensus. Bringing a large rolodex with names and numbers for the key actors will be a plus.

The ideal candidate shall have a minimum of fifteen years of progressively responsible experience in public or private sector management and at least five years' experience in a manager's position overseeing the efforts of at least 400 employees.

## **Required Qualifications**

A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with a major in relevant disciplines, including but not limited to, engineering, administration, management or a related field, is required. A Master's degree is preferred.

## The Current Executive Director

The current Executive Director is retiring after 10 years of service as Executive Director. Her predecessor served even longer. In other words, this position is not only highly desirable, it is very stable.

## Internal & Local Candidates

The Executive Director position is a critical position of high importance in the industry and the City of New Orleans. We anticipate some local candidates will apply. While some of these candidates are highly qualified, the Search Committee and the Board are committed to hiring the best qualified candidate.

#### Compensation

The starting salary will be commensurate with one's experience. Health and retirement benefits are included.

#### Residency

Residency within the City limits is required.

# How to Express Interest

E-mail your resume to RecruitTwo@cb-asso.com by October 25th. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

#### The Process

Candidates will be screened in November. Interviews will be held the first week in December with a selection shortly thereafter.

# Confidentiality

Your application is subject to disclosure. Moreover, it is anticipated that the names of the finalists will be published in the newspaper well in advance of the interviews. While we understand that some applicants may desire confidentiality, please note that this selection process is for a public position in a public utility and as such, the Public Records Act applies.

## Other Important Information

The City of New Orleans is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, creed, culture, or ancestry. All are encouraged to apply.

