

City Manager

Albany, GA

(Population 76,000)

The birth place of Ray Charles, Albany is located in southwestern Georgia and is the trade and cultural center for the region. It is the ninth largest city in Georgia, a friendly place where life is not too complicated and a good place to live, work and raise a family. It has a nice home town feel and spirit as well as virtually any amenity you might want. In fact, residents say Albany is just like Atlanta except instead of having twenty of everything, Albany has one. They also say it has everything from A to Z, "A" being the airport and "Z" being the zoo. The attractions include, to name a few, the aquarium (the Flint RiverQuarium), the Museum of Art, the Ballet Theater, the Civil Rights Movement Museum, the Symphony Orchestra, the RiverQuarium Imagination Theater, the Weatherbee Planetarium and, of course, the zoo, also known as the Parks at Chehaw. The City also has many other parks and recreational activities abound, particularly if you like to hunt and fish. The quail hunting is renowned worldwide and the catfish and bass fishing is excellent. If you like the ocean, it is a little over three hours away, and if you like the big city, Atlanta is three hours north and Jacksonville, FL, three and half hours southeast. Pecans are plentiful and you can run down the road to Plains and hear former President Jimmy Carter preach on most Sundays.

Albany's educational opportunities are very good and some of the public schools are excellent - Lincoln Elementary, for example, is a magnet school and one of the best in the state. While, the private and charter schools offer alternatives to the public school system, the Commission Members with children have them in the public schools. The City has two four year schools of higher education - Albany State University and Darton College - both of which are part of the University System of Georgia. The state-run Albany Technical College also offers post-secondary vocational and occupational training. Housing prices are reasonable and in some cases, amazing. One of the elected officials purchased a 4,000 square foot fixer-upper for \$20,000. Of course it needed quite a bit of work but for that price it is hard to see how you could go wrong.

But more than anything else, Albany offers a small town feel while having virtually everything you could want or need. As noted the people are friendly. The City is easy to get around in and does not have the headaches major metropolitan centers have. Think of it - Albany has 1 car for every 20 in Atlanta.

HISTORY

Prior to its being formally settled, the Creek Indians inhabited the area around Albany. They used the flint found near the river to make tools and weapons like arrowheads. In 1836, Nelson Tift, businessman from Connecticut settled along the Flint River and named his new town Albany after Albany, New York. Allegedly it was because both sat at the navigable heads of rivers. Alexander Shotwell laid out the town and it was incorporated as a city by an act of the General Assembly of Georgia on December 27, 1838.

Surrounded by a prosperous farming region which produced large amounts of cotton, Albany was in a prime transportation center where steamboats called regularly. Albany later became a rail hub. In 1841, the Flint River flooded the City and unfortunately, it was not the last time flooding occurred. In it happened again in 1925, in 1994 (when much of the downtown was destroyed) and again in 1998. In 1937, Chehaw Park was established as a part of a New Deal program.

In 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps began building a training base near Albany. The airfield was deactivated between 1946 and 1947, but after the beginning of the Cold War, and the establishment of the U.S. Air Force, the airfield was reopened. The runways were upgraded and the base became Turner Air Force Base. It was used for very heavy jet bombers, such as the B-52 Stratofortress. The base was transferred to the Navy in 1967 and was used as the shore base of nearly all the Navy's RA-5C Vigilante twin-jet carrier-based reconnaissance aircraft. The base was then permanently deactivated and relinquished to civilian control in 1974. In 1979, the Miller Brewing Company purchased part of the property to build a new brewing plant. In 1951, the U.S. Marine Corps established a logistics base on the eastern outskirts of Albany.

During the early 1960s, Albany played a prominent role in the civil rights movement. The Albany Movement was led by William G. Anderson. In 1961, Dr. Martin L. King was swept up in a mass arrest of peaceful demonstrators and declined bail until the city made concessions. King returned in July 1962 and was sentenced to forty-five days in jail or a \$178 fine. He chose jail. Three days into his sentence, Chief Pritchett discreetly arranged for King's fine to be paid and ordered his release. "We had witnessed persons being kicked off lunch counter stools ... ejected from churches ... and thrown into jail ... But for the first time, we witnessed being kicked out of jail," said King.

A great deal of progress has been made since those days and the community is now fully integrated. African Americans are well-respected and hold many key leadership positions in the community. Still memories of segregation persist and the wounds of the period have not entirely healed.

COMMERCE

While the City's roots were in agriculture and pecan groves, pine trees and farms still surround it, very few residents work in these areas. The largest employers are: Phoebe Putney Hospital (3,800 employees), the United States Marine Corps Logistic Base (3,100 employees), Dougherty County Board of Education (2,900), Proctor & Gamble (1,400), City of Albany (1,400), Dougherty County (670), Miller Brewing (650) Albany State University (550), Teleperformance USA (470) and Palmyra Medial Center (450). The largest property tax payers based on assessed value are: Miller Brewing (\$58.4 million assessed value), Bell South (\$15.3 million), Palmyra Medical Center (\$15.2 million), Albany Mall LLC (\$14.4 million), M&M Mars (\$13.9 million), Flint River Services (\$11.1 million), Alltel (\$8.8 million), Lowes (\$6.5 million), Alliance PPS FX4 Ltd. (\$6 million) and Sam's/Wal-Mart Stores (\$5,9 million).

DEMOGRAPHICS AND CLIMATE

Albany's overall population is estimated to be 75,616 (down almost two percent since the 2000 Census). It is the largest entity in Dougherty County (population 95,859) and its population tends to be younger than the national average with a median age of 30.5 – the national median is 36.5. The population is split as follows: 8% is between 0 and 5 years old, 19% between 5 and 18, 14% between 18 and 25, 47% between 25 and 65 and the remaining 14% is over 65. The median family income is \$38,130 and 22% of the population is below the poverty line. 27% of individuals are also below the poverty line. 85% of the population which is over 25 has a high school degree and 21% have a college degree. The City is primarily composed of two races. African Americans make up almost 70% of the population while whites compose about 28%. Asians are approximately one percent and Hispanics are a little over one percent of the total population. The median value of owner-occupied homes is \$97,000.

The climate is very pleasant overall with an average high of 78 degrees Fahrenheit and an average low of 53. The area averages a little over 53 inches a year in rainfall.

THE GOVERNMENT

The City covers 56 square miles and, as the center of a metropolitan area, serves a population of approximately 165,000. The City provides all the standard governmental services (including code enforcement, community development, engineering, fire, parks and recreation, police, public works (including streets, solid waste and sanitary sewer). The City government also oversees an airport, cemetery, golf course and municipal court. Utilities (water, gas and light)

are also provided through the City but under a separate authority whose board members are appointed by the City Commission. The city also contributes to a number of independent agencies ranging from the Boy's Club, the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Commission and the Albany Dougherty Inner City Authority.

The government is based on the commission-manager form of government. The elected body is composed of the Mayor and six Commissioners. The Mayor is elected at large while all the Commissioners must reside in their districts and are elected within their wards. All the elected officials serve staggered four year terms with the next election being in November 2011. Commissioners generally conduct themselves professionally and while they may disagree, it does not get personal. The Commission votes its convictions. It also genuinely likes and respects the City staff.

Financially the City is very strong. The property tax millage is down from 10.77 in 2007 to 8.66 in 2011 yet property tax revenues are down only 10%. Indeed, general fund expenditures have grown from \$45.6 million to a projected \$56.8 million over the same period. While the recession has led to other local governments cutting employees and services and/or imposing furloughs, Albany has in fact increased its work force from 863 employees in 2006 to 923 in the current fiscal year. Almost all the growth has been in fire/rescue.

THE ISSUES

While Albany is a great place to live and work, it is not without issues. While the economic downturn has not impacted Albany the way it has many other places, the City needs to continue being watchful and fiscally conservative. The first significant challenge, however, is economic development and bringing new life to the downtown area. Given the flooding and the typical propensity for new stores and businesses to open on the outskirts of the City, the downtown area, while attractive, is not a bustling commercial center. Changing that could bring new prosperity to the area and it is needed. As noted, over 20% of the population lives below the poverty level. The second challenge is to continue modernizing the government and completing the work begun to introduce and improve standard policies and procedures. Public safety is always an issue and can always bear improvement. Finally, relations between the City and County could be improved. Albany is the only incorporated city in Dougherty County. Further consolidation is a possibility. It has been done in several other places in Georgia and will be considered over the next year. It involves action by the State legislature and votes by both the city and county residents. Most of the people we spoke with do not expect it to pass. Residents generally seem pleased with the services they receive and do not see a reason for change.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City is looking for a strong but diplomatic manager who will embrace Albany and put his/her heart and energy into maintaining and improving what is already here. The individual will be a leader and not a bureaucrat. He/she will be open-minded, even-handed, progressive, proactive, knowledgeable, visionary and achievement-oriented as well as ethical, receptive to

new ideas, firm but flexible, forward thinking, responsive and outgoing. The manager will have outstanding communications and organizational skills. The individual will be not just articulate but also an excellent listener. She/he will understand the role of the manager and execute the policies the majority of the Commission has directed. The manager will not be afraid to be candid, will speak up and voice his/her opinion. Once the elected body has made its decision, he/she will embrace it and move them forward as if it were the manager's own. All the elected officials will be treated equally and given the same information. The individual will believe in open government and be upfront, candid and welcoming. If you are not a people person, you will not succeed in this job. The individual should plan on having an open door policy for the residents, the staff and the elected officials. She/he will be professional and politically savvy but not politically involved. Providing top quality customer service will be an important priority and s/he will know how to encourage outstanding customer service. The individual will also firmly believe in accountability. Other important characteristics are experience working with an active and often skeptical media, and the ability to anticipate/resolve issues before they become problems. Good judgment and common sense are essential. The Commission is not expecting a miracle worker but rather someone who works hard and gets things done. It is expecting someone who works well with other governmental agencies.

The position requires a Bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, public policy or related field and 7 to 10 years of increasingly responsible experience as a senior government executive and at least five as a City Manager or Assistant City Manager (or similar position). A Master's degree is preferred. Experience working with different races and in a diverse community is very important. Experience and knowledge of the wide variety of services Albany offers will be important as is demonstrated skill in intergovernmental relations.

COMPENSATION

The starting salary will be between \$120,000 and \$170,000. The Commission would prefer to pay at the lower end of the range but recognizes it may not be able to acquire the right combination of knowledge, skills, experience and ability without paying more. The outgoing manager's salary is just under \$140,000 annually.

RESIDENCY

Residency in the City is strongly preferred but not required.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All applications will be kept strictly confidential and no candidate's names will be released until finalists are named. Then, as required by Georgia law, the finalists' names will be released. Further, a selection cannot be made until 14 days after those names have been made public.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your resume to **Recruit24@cb-asso.com** by February 11, 2011. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates at (561) 707-3537.

SCHEDULE

Candidates will be screened between February 12 and March 14 with interviews held on April 1st and 2nd with a selection made shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Albany is an Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages women and minorities to apply. It is also a drug free workplace.