



Des Moines Water Works

If you are looking for a great job and a great community, look no further. Simply skip down to the section on how to apply and submit your resume as indicated.

Polk County, where Des Moines Water Works is headquartered and where the vast majority of its service area is located, is a regional business, educational, residential, and recreational center, and it is growing. It is the third largest insurance center in the world. Downtown Des Moines, the county seat, is undergoing a revitalization with the construction of new housing, businesses and entertainment venues. A few examples are new condominium developments, the events center, a science center and a library. Area schools get very high marks, housing is reasonably priced, and the area is viewed as a great place to raise a family. Traffic is minimal, and the commute to work is usually less than 20 minutes.

A wide range of organizations have recognized Des Moines for its quality of life and other features. In 2012 it has already been recognized as #10 on The Business Journal's list of cities with the "Best Educated Young Workforce", as 2nd on Forbes' list of Best Cities for Jobs, and as "One of America's Best Farmers' Markets" by Country Living. And the year is not even half over. In 2011 it was #5 on Parent Magazine's "Best Cities for Families", #1 on Forbes' list of "Best Cities for Young Professionals" and #2 on Forbes' "Best Place for Business and Careers" (it was #1 in 2010). It was also listed as the #1 "Richest Metro in the Nation" by U.S. News and World Report and the #1 "City in the U.S. for Renters" by Time Magazine. Other significant achievements include being ranked as Market Watch's "Best City of Business" in 2009, Kiplinger's #7 "Best City for the Next Decade" in 2010 and Brookings rated it as one of 20 strongest performing areas in 2009.

We should add that Forbes ranked Des Moines as #1 for having the cleanest tap water in 2008. The reason is Des Moines Water Works is one of the nation's premier water utilities. Its staff is outstanding, dedicated and competent. Its facilities are well maintained and well run. Just as important, the utility is financially sound. So, yes, it would be hard to find a better job in a better place to live.

History

The Des Moines Water Company was formed in 1871 and within a year, it had laid 10 miles of pipe. Ten hydrants were placed along it so "water can be drawn by citizens or passersby for purposes of drinking for persons or animals." Pumps could discharge about 2 million gallons per day (mgd) and the water came from a large filtering tank that was sunk in the sand and gravel on the south side of the Raccoon River. The tank was made of boiler iron - open at the bottom and closed at the top. The sides were perforated in numerous places to let water in. This work was the beginning of what is known today as the Fleur Drive Water Treatment Plant.

In 1884, the company began constructing a gallery system that would also use groundwater from the Raccoon River. It was the first of its kind in the U.S. and by 1885 the gallery extended 750 feet. It was constructed from wood and regularly lengthened. By 1910, a new gallery had been constructed with concrete rings (5 feet in diameter and 2 feet long) which were held slightly apart so water could trickle in. Also in 1910, ponds were constructed in the Utility's park land to augment the water supply. In 1918, a permanent pumping station was built on the park grounds to pump water from the river into these ponds.

In the years the Utility was privately owned, the City Council received numerous complaints and tried to purchase the Water Works. It finally succeeded in 1919 and the Des Moines Water Works (DMWW)



was formed as a public utility. During the Depression, the Utility provided work to many men who could not pay their water bills. They laid water mains, graded park roads, inspected hydrants, and beautified the park land the Utility owned.

In 1942, DMWW paid \$400,000 for 650 acres of farmland southwest of Des Moines to build a reservoir to use during emergencies. It opened in 1948 and in 1955 was renamed the Dale Maffitt Reservoir. 1948 was also a notable year because it produced the first water rate increase in 50 years. In 1949, a softening plant was completed and in 1972, water meter reading equipment was installed on the outside of homes.

In 1993, the Raccoon River crested at 26.7 feet which was a record and measured 4.7 feet above flood stage. The Fleur Drive Treatment Plant flooded and was shut down. Des Moines residents were without water service for 11 days and non-potable water for 18 days.

In 2000 the Maffitt Treatment Plant (later renamed the L.D. McMullen Water Treatment Plant) was completed. On June 7, 2006, a daily pumpage record of 90.19 mg was set.

In June 2008, another flood occurred. The Raccoon River crested at 24.5 feet at the Fleur Drive Treatment Plant, only 2.2 feet below the Flood of 1993 record. Due to extensive levee work and flood preparation, however, DMWW conducted normal treatment operations throughout the flood.

Area Weather

Des Moines' climate is considered to be "humid continental" with hot, humid summers and cold snowy winters. Summers bring average high temperatures in the mid 80's and lows in the mid 60's. The average high temperatures in the winter tend to be in the 30s with lows in the upper teens. The County gets an average annual precipitation of 35 inches with the heaviest rainfall being in the spring and summer (averaging 4.0 inches/month) and the least precipitation in the winter months

(averaging about 1.2 inches/month).

The Water Works

The Des Moines Water Works was formed as a public utility under Section 388 of the Code of Iowa in 1919. Under it, the water utility is operated by a Board of Trustees, who are appointed by the Mayor of the City of Des Moines and approved by the City Council. The Board has all of the powers of the City Council to operate the utility except it cannot levy taxes. The Board hires a General Manager to operate the utility. The General Manager produces an annual budget which is reviewed, modified, and approved by the Board of Trustees. The Board is the only body of the utility which can enter into contracts, and the utility must comply with State of Iowa public improvement bidding and open meeting laws. Board members serve six year terms and are not term limited. The current Board is composed of one member who has served a little over three terms, one who is in her third term and three members who are in their first term. The Board seems to be collegial and recognizes that DMWW is an exceptional Utility. They also realize they have an exceptional staff.

Des Moines Water Works (DMWW) provides water directly or indirectly to 500,000 customers in the Des Moines metro area. The Utility has approximately 80,000 meters and almost all are read remotely. It routinely pumps 47 mgd with its peak capacity considered to be 110 mgd. Slightly more than half its finished water is sold in bulk to cities and other entities in central Iowa (some 23 communities in all). The remainder is sold directly to customers. The Utility has an AA+ bond rating from Standard and Poors and an Aa1 from Moody's. Its water rates to customers are below the national average which is impressive given the relatively poor quality of the majority of the raw water supply. The Utility does not have any significant responsibility for wastewater collection or treatment.

The Water Works has three water treatment plants. The largest is the Fleur Drive plant with a capacity

of approximately 75 mgd. Its water sources are the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers and shallow groundwater which is collected in a three mile long infiltration gallery along the river. The L.D. McMullen Water Treatment Plant is a 125 mgd Water Treatment Plant and is located at Maffitt Lake. The Saylorville Water Treatment Plant is the newest treatment plant and was completed in 2011. It utilizes membrane technology to soften and purify the finished water. It has a capacity of 10 mgd and is designed so it can be expanded to 20 mgd.

In addition to water billing, customer service also bills and answers calls for the Des Moines solid waste, stormwater utility and sanitary sewer.

The Utility has approximately 220 employees and a total budget of \$56,500,000. Approximately three quarters of the employees are represented by AFSME, the Utility's only union.

The Opportunities

While the Des Moines Water Works is well run and financially strong, the current Board wants to ensure all resources are carefully managed. It feels what DMWW achieves to be outstanding but believes it could be run in a more business like manner. The information the Board thinks it needs to be fully comfortable with the operation is not always readily available or easily understood. The Board would also like to find ways to expand its sales as that would spread the Utility's fixed costs over a larger quantity of water. Capacity is not an issue. Alternative revenue sources should also be explored. In the area of employees, the Utility was unionized in 1999. Management and the union continue working to build a cohesive working relationship. Grievances over what



appear to be relatively small matters sometimes go to arbitration or are settled just short of it. Another challenge is that many of the Water Works employees are eligible for or will soon be eligible for retirement. In fact, 25% could retire right now. 41% will be eligible in five years and 60% will be eligible in 10 years. The reason they stay is the work force is dedicated and they love what they do. The benefits are also quite good. Finally, the three mile long infiltration gallery along the Raccoon River is under a 1,500 acre Water Works owned park. The park is an open and wooded space that serves as a wonderful community asset. Residents use the space for everything from hiking to fishing tournaments and from picnicking to team sporting activities (softball, football and soccer). A balance must be struck between the Utility's core mission of providing clean and safe drinking water to its customers and its desire to ensure its grounds are operated proactively to serve the public.

The Ideal Candidate

The Board is seeking a strong, experienced professional leader and manager. The CEO will be achievement-oriented, a doer and a problem solver – someone who can anticipate the future and position the Utility in a way that it can take advantage of opportunities. He/she will be flexible and creative, seeking the best solution even if innovative and non-traditional. The individual will have a sense of urgency and be impatient, while realistic, about timeframes. Solutions do not need to be implemented yesterday but they also do not need to take until the week after next. The CEO will partner with the Board to guide the Water Works while also recognizing the Board makes the policy decisions. While a basic knowledge of utilities is important, they are really looking for someone who has a strong business sense. They want someone who will review the utility in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, someone who will question current practices and always seek to improve them. It should be noted that everyone recognizes the Utility does an outstanding job. Rather the concern is

on whether it can operate better, more efficiently and more transparently. The next CEO will be someone who has outstanding communication skills and who will translate technical and financial jargon into terms everyone can understand. The individual will also be the face of the Utility. He/she will realize one of the CEO's duties is to interact with the public and the employees, and to be part of the internal and external communities. Ability in public relations will be important. The Utility has a great story to tell – it just needs to be told. Excellent financial and negotiation skills will be important. The individual will be a careful steward of the public funds.

The ideal candidate will have ten years of progressive management experience including at least five in an executive management role preferably in a public or private sector utility. Demonstrated experience implementing benchmarking and continuous improvement is a plus. A Bachelor's and Master's degree in public administration, business administration, engineering or a related field are required although two years of additional experience may be substituted for a Master's degree.

Compensation

The anticipated salary range is \$140,000 to \$200,000, and the actual salary will depend on qualifications.

The Most Recent CEO

The most recent CEO is retiring in September after five years as the CEO and over 25 years with the Water Works.

How to Apply

Resumes should be e-mailed to Recruit29@cb-asso.com by June 16, 2012. Mailed or faxed resumes will not be accepted. Questions should be addressed to Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates at (561) 707-3537.

Confidentiality

Candidates who wish confidentiality should indicate that desire in their cover e-mail, or in the heading of their resume. All documents can remain confidential until finalists are selected. At that time, the finalists' names (but not the names of other applicants) will be released, along with any background material compiled during the search.

The Process

It is expected that interviews will be held on August 2nd and 3rd with a selection made on August 6th. It is also anticipated that spouses/partners will be invited to visit Des Moines during the interview/selection process.

Other Important Information

Des Moines Water Works is an Equal Opportunity Employer and minorities and women are encouraged to apply.

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING