



Leesburg, FL

Re-Opened
Apply by September 6, 2013

Welcome to Leesburg – a vibrant, historic Florida community located in the heart of Lake County in Central Florida. This picturesque city of 20,390 residents is nestled between lakes Griffin and Harris and is located in a growing area just 40 miles northwest of Orlando.

Known for its temperate climate, extensive waterways, friendly and welcoming people and its relaxed lifestyle, Leesburg is a wonderful and safe place that residents are proud to call home. It is also a center for commerce with an international airport, a regional shopping center, a large hospital and medical community, two colleges and growing industrial development.

Leesburg also offers many recreational opportunities. The city's beautiful 64-acre Venetian Gardens park includes a public swimming pool, community meeting center, baseball/softball fields, volleyball courts, picnic

tables, park benches, Kids Korner playground and the Venetian Cove Marina. The Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex includes two soccer/football fields, two youth softball fields, two Babe Ruth baseball fields and four adult softball fields. The Leesburg Recreational Complex/Gymnasium hosts numerous basketball and volleyball tournaments and athletic programs for all ages throughout the year. The area's lakes, rivers and canals provide wonderful fishing opportunities. If you are a golfer, 30 courses lie within 10 miles of the city.

Just 20 minutes to the north is the Ocala National Forest. Part of what is known as the "real Florida," the forest attracts over two million visitors per year and covers more than 450,000 acres. Established in 1908, it is the oldest national forest east of the Mississippi and home to hundreds of varieties of animals.

Leesburg is also in an ideal location for those interested in Florida's most popular attractions. The theme parks of Walt Disney World, Universal Studios and SeaWorld are all within an hour's drive. Nearby Orlando is home to the Magic basketball team. A little further away are the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers and MLB's Tampa Bay Devil Rays. If the college game is more to your liking, the University of Florida - one of the premier sports universities in the nation - is about 70 miles north. For the beach lovers, Daytona Beach - one of the world's most famous beaches - is 70 miles to the northeast and Clearwater Beach is slightly farther in the opposite direction.

Another of Leesburg's attractive features is its hometown feel. For all the hustle and bustle one can find in the areas surrounding the city, Leesburg itself is a relaxed home-style community with wonderfully friendly residents and a strong family tradition. Many were born here and enjoy the city so much that they have remained here most of their lives. The retiree population is growing as well, adding variety and a touch of distinction to the community. It is also, however, a great place to raise a family. The schools are solid and improving. Any student willing to work hard can get an excellent education. Further, the local hospital is very good.

Finally, one of Leesburg's most attractive qualities is that a high quality home can be purchased at a very reasonable price. Most of the homes are a short drive from the lakes, and many are available in very safe neighborhoods. The typical three-bedroom, two-bath home of 2,400 square feet will cost between \$150,000 and \$250,000. All in all, now is an excellent time to buy.



In summary, Leesburg offers a variety of unique personal and professional opportunities that would make it an attractive place to work for any municipal government professional. We invite you to apply.

History

To understand Leesburg, one need look no farther than its history. In the mid-1850s Evander McIver Lee came to the area looking for a better climate to ease his rheumatism. What he found – bald eagles, Florida panthers and lots of fish – made him decide to stay. He recognized the area's strengths: its temperate winters, extensive waterways and picturesque countryside. He also started the city's family-oriented tradition when he invited several of his brothers to join him in settling the area.

In short order Leesburg became a small community of homesteaders. Interestingly the city's name is the result of shipping directions given by Calvin Lee, Evander's brother, during a merchandising trip to New York City in 1866. The city quickly became a spot of local political prominence as it was named the county seat of Sumter County. The city was incorporated in 1875. In 1887 Lake County was formed and Leesburg was included in the area ceded to the new county. At that point it ceased to be the county seat.

In the early 20th century, Leesburg developed its agricultural industry and soon became an important center in watermelon production. In 1930, the community instituted a watermelon festival to celebrate the crop. Current local events include Leesburg Mardi Gras, Bikefest, 4th of July celebration, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, Beast Feast, Lake County Home and Garden Show, Chili Cook-off, the Leesburg Christmas House, Juneteenth Celebration, Lights of Lake, Saturday Morning Market, and the Fine Arts

Festival. In 1938 the Venetian Gardens were built as an attractive waterside park on the shores of Lake Harris. The gardens are still a place of some renown.

As the watermelon trade diversified and expanded elsewhere, Leesburg also began to expand its agricultural base and became a citrus producer. This trend lasted until the 1980s when several early freezes damaged crops and caused such economic stress that producers moved further south.



In the last decade, Leesburg's population increased by 25% and would have grown further were it not for the real estate market crash in Florida. Many areas are platted and ready for construction so it is anticipated that Leesburg's next golden era is just around the corner. The city's population is expected to grow from more than 20,000 to 65,000 within the next 22 years.

Demographics

The 2011 Census found the city's population to be 20,390 people with 8,800 households and 5,244 families. The racial makeup of the city was 63.5% White, 28.2% African American and other races or those of two or more races composed the remainder. Hispanics (of all races) composed 9% of the population. The population is spread reasonably evenly over age groups: 30.3% of the population is under the age of 25, 22.3% from 25 to 45, 24.2% from 45 to 65, and 23% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age is 42.6 (compared to a national median age of 37.1). The city had approximately 4,415 children enrolled in school and the median family income was estimated to be \$36,061 as of 2011. Approximately 16% of the population was below the poverty line.

Geography

Leesburg is located at the head of the Ocklawaha River system with Lake Griffin to the north, Lake Harris to the east and Lake Denham somewhat centrally located. The city is in west central Lake County, a little north and west of the middle of the state of Florida. It is 40 miles northwest of Orlando, 85 miles northeast of Tampa and 100 miles southwest of



Table I: Climate Data

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Year |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Average High °F | 68 | 71 | 76 | 81 | 87 | 90 | 91 | 91 | 88 | 82 | 76 | 69 | 80.8 |
| Average Low °F | 46 | 49 | 53 | 58 | 65 | 71 | 73 | 73 | 71 | 64 | 55 | 48 | 60.5 |
| Precipitation in Inches | 2.9 | 2.9 | 4.2 | 2.7 | 3.3 | 7.2 | 5.9 | 7.1 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.1 | 2.5 | 49.8 |

Source: The Weather Channel

Jacksonville. The countryside is largely flat with some slight rises. In fact, land elevations dip to a low of 53 feet above sea level and rise to a high of 192 feet.

Climate

Leesburg has a transitional climate that features many characteristics of a tropical climate without a great deal of seasonal variation in temperature. Over the course of a year, the temperature typically varies from 48°F to 91°F and is rarely below 36°F or above 95°F. Average annual precipitation is approximately 49.8 inches, with the heaviest rainfall occurring from June through September. See Table I for details.

The hurricane season is between June 1 and November 30 with major hurricanes most likely in September and October. The city of Leesburg is, however, far enough inland that is not dramatically impacted by tropical storms. Most hurricanes are significantly weakened by the time they pass through the city. The last major hurricane activity came in 2004 when several passed through the Central Florida area.

Commerce

The city and Lake County, as a whole, have transitioned from their agricultural roots to a growth driven economy that is heavily centered in real estate, retail, personal services, and healthcare. With the recent real-estate market crash and rising fuel prices, the unemployment rate has risen to relatively high levels compared to prior years. Lake County's October 2012

unemployment rate of 8.4 percent is below the previous year's rate of 10.8 percent. This rate is slightly lower than the state average (8.5 percent).

Leesburg presently has 2,643 businesses that employ 25,068 employees. The top four business sectors in terms for employees are located in Table 2.

Leesburg's top private sector employer remains Central Florida Health Alliance, boasting a labor force of 1,770. Other notable employers in Leesburg that employ over 500 employees include: Lake County School District, Lifestream Behavioral Center, City of Leesburg and Lake-Sumter State College.

Leesburg International Airport (KLEE) is an 850-acre controlled-access general aviation airport that caters primarily to recreational and corporate aircraft and hosts 50,000 landings and takeoffs per year. Approximately 140 fixed wing and 15 helicopters are permanently based there. The airport has a contract air traffic control tower that is staffed 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day. Over the past three years, Leesburg, like other similar airports has experienced reduced aircraft operations as a result of the general economic downturn in the US economy.

Table II: Leesburg Employment by Economic Sector

| Sector | # of Businesses | # of Employees |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Health Service | 261 | 8,253 |
| Retail Trade | 460 | 4,123 |
| Accommodations & Food Service | 150 | 2,047 |
| Construction | 251 | 1,511 |

However, in recent months the airport has begun to see a slight uptick in corporate-type aircraft activity as businesses start to loosen travel budgets. The airport's proximity to Orlando and The Villages make the facility a preferred reliever airport for corporate traffic from larger facilities in Orlando and Sanford. Businesses located on the airport property employ over 360 people in various capacities, the majority of which are working in aviation-related positions.

The Government

Since 1922, the city of Leesburg has operated under the Commission/Manager form of government. The five (5) member Commission consists of a Mayor, Vice-Mayor and three (3) Commissioners. They serve staggered four-year terms and rotate the role of mayor and vice mayor among the members. Two members are elected at large while the remaining three represent specific districts. The latter reside in their district and are elected by the residents of that particular district. Elections coincide with the national elections in even numbered years. In the last election, two new commissioners were elected. Overall, the commission is progressive and forward-thinking. In general they work well together. All the members want Leesburg to grow, have a vision, and be the premiere community in Central Florida. They also speak highly of the city's staff.

Leesburg is a complex city that offers all the standard municipal services and more. It is one of few Florida municipalities to offer a full spectrum of municipally owned utilities including: electric, gas, stormwater, water, wastewater, solid waste and nearly 300 linear miles of high-speed fiber-optic communications serving the city, public schools, medical facilities, businesses and governments across Lake County. The city also has a marina, library, gymnasium, museum and, as previously stated, its own international airport. In fact, it is one of a very limited number of general aviation airports with its own customs service.

The general fund budget for 2012-2013 was roughly \$24,000,000 with a total budget of \$152,710,000. Almost \$8 million of the general fund budget comes from transfers from the utility funds with the largest

being electric (\$5.3 million). The city has 515 authorized positions. Of those employees, 81 are in General Government, 107 are in the Police Department, 61 are in the Fire Department, 29 with the Library, 33 with Parks and Recreation, 53 with Electric, 23 with Gas, 27 with Water, 45 in Wastewater, and the remainder are in other departments.

The total assessed taxable property value over the course of the last ten years has climbed from \$754 million to a high of roughly \$1.75 billion in 2009 before declining to its present amount of \$1.113 billion in 2012/2013. Over the last 10 years the millage rate has remained relatively stable at or near its current level of 4.3179.

The Opportunities and Challenges

While in comparison to most Florida communities experiencing the current economic recession, Leesburg has been on relatively good financial footing in recent years. Belt-tightening has occurred – some maintenance has been deferred and employees have not had a raise in five years (although they did receive a bonus one year). The current general fund budget has relied, to a large degree, on transfers from the utilities' funds. Next fiscal year promises to be more challenging. It is estimated that the city will have a million to 1.5 million dollar hole to fill in its budget. As it is, the employees are proud of what they have accomplished with the resources they have, but they fear that while they are getting it done, they are not getting it done with excellence.

Economic development is a focus area for the city although a plan and target industries need to be identified. One element that will help is that Duke Energy has identified the city's industrial park as a place it wants to focus on and help grow. Additionally the city has annexed 20,000 acres to the south and approved 10,000 homes. In other words, it is ready to go as growth returns. Ideally, this development will help provide revenues to better fund community activities. The goal, as one council member put it, is that "Our citizens will be better able to live, work, play, and shop," all in their own city.

Part of that development effort may involve making

better use of the Lake Harris waterfront around Venetian Gardens. Currently, no businesses are located on the city's lakeside property, and some feel the city's scenic views of the lake are an underutilized resource.

Another area of concern is housing and property values. A significant portion of the homes in the city are rental (possibly as high as 60%) and many are Section 8 Housing. Only 2,400 homes have a taxable value that exceeds the \$50,000 homestead exemption.

Finally, the city has residents who are quite happy with the city the way it is while an increasing number favor changes to improve business development and local amenities. Balancing these factions while doing what is best for the city in the long term will be a challenge.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will have experience in a similar or larger City in terms of population and complexity. The Council is not interested in someone from a City with experience only in smaller cities (that is, populations of less than 25,000). The next manager will be progressive and a consensus builder, someone who will bring people together around a vision for the city – a vision that seems to already exist, a vision that the staff and the Commission already share but a vision that is yet to be formerly articulated and fleshed out. The result will not simply be a glossy document with lofty goals but also a road map showing how to get there and how to create a better future for Leesburg and all its residents. The individual will facilitate the creation of that document and know how to make it a reality.

The next manager will be a partner and advisor to the Commissioners, while recognizing he/she works for them. He/she will treat all of them equally and ensure they all have all with the same information. Integrity is critical and the individual's number one priority will be doing what is best for Leesburg. All the Commissioners have indicated they want a strong manager. They also expect someone who will work well with people and while decisive, also will be diplomatic. They expect their manager to be able to say no and to articulate the reasons. They also expect the manager to be able to

do so in a positive, customer/resident friendly way. Of course, the individual will not be able to keep everyone happy all the time and, in fact, may anger some people. The Commissioners recognize that will happen and are receptive as long as the manager is truly representing the city's best interests. The ideal candidate will be politically savvy but not political.

The Commission is looking for a leader who thinks fast, is quick on his/her feet and never misses an opportunity to improve the city and its functions. They know you cannot run a government like a business but they also know governments can run more like a business than they often do. Outstanding customer service will be important to the next manager, but so will accountability. While the individual will not be a micromanager, he/she will know what is going on in the organization. The next manager will establish benchmarks, and then ensure that projects are completed on time and within budget. The ideal candidate will also be prepared to take the appropriate steps when projects start to fall behind schedule or financially. The manager will have high but not unreasonable expectations and be able to communicate them to everyone in a readily understandable way. The individual will care about staff. At the same time he/she will be able to make the tough decisions with the best interests of the City of Leesburg at heart.

The ideal candidate will be naturally upbeat and positive as well as creative and entrepreneurial. He or she will need to develop a positive and enthusiastic work environment that will foster professional growth and development among City staff. He/she will be willing to try new ideas and take reasonable risks. The individual will also recognize that not all new ideas succeed and will not punish staff when they try something new that fails. A sense of humor will be important as will be a thick skin.

Experience and a comfort level working in diverse situations will be important as will a belief in the natural goodness of all men and women. To the next manager, the little guy will be just as important as the Fortune 500 executive. Given the significance of utilities to Leesburg and its future, the ideal candidate will have experience working with municipal utilities. While City staff is

excellent, a basic understanding of the processes and dynamics of utilities is a definite plus.

As economic development is an area of critical importance to the City, the ideal candidate will know how to establish connections with the leaders of private sector entities, and sell the City and its attributes as an excellent landing spot for any corporation. A demonstrated track record of obtaining grant funding will be a plus as will experience working with unions.

Finally, the commission is not looking for someone who will make Leesburg a stepping-stone for other career options. They would like to find a high quality city manager who will join their community, establish roots and be proud to call Leesburg home.

Required Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have at least 10 years' experience as a City Manager, Deputy City Manager or an Assistant City Manager. The individual is expected to have at least a bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, urban planning or a related field. Individuals with other particularly strong credentials will be considered.

Residency

The selected candidate must reside in the City of Leesburg utility area.

Compensation

The salary range for the City Manager is \$120,000 – \$160,000. The Commission will be flexible within the range if a candidate presents himself or herself with outstanding qualifications. Benefits are very good.

How to Apply

E-mail your resume to Recruit29@cb-asso.com by September 6, 2013. If you applied previously, your application will be reconsidered with those of the new applicants. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates at (561) 707-3537.

The Process

Finalist interviews are anticipated to be in early to mid-October with a selection shortly thereafter.

Other Important Information

The City of Leesburg is an Equal Opportunity Employer and embraces diversity. It encourages women and minorities to apply. Under the Florida Public Records Act, all applications are subject to disclosure upon receipt. Veteran's preference will be awarded under applicable Florida law.

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

