

Director, Economic Development

Loudoun County, VA

(Population 289,737)

If you are achievement-oriented, seeking a supportive environment and interested in doing some real economic development, even in a sluggish economy, this job is for you. Loudoun County is a hidden treasure, a remarkable success story and a story that needs to be told.

In 1960, Loudoun County had a population of approximately 20,000, virtually unchanged for 100 years. Then things began to change. Dulles International Airport opened in the County's southeast corner and the people and businesses began to come. By 2000 its population had grown to 170,000 and now is around 289,737. Even in the face of rapid growth, its infrastructure has remained excellent. Its schools, for example, are all first rate. In fact, all of its high schools are ranked in the top 5% in the Country. But that is not all. 58% of the adult population has at least a Bachelor's degree. Its per capita income is the highest in the country. Unemployment is only 4.6%. The eastern third of the County is suburban while the western two thirds is rural with small towns, agriculture, wineries, horse farms and 160,000 acres of well preserved open space. The County is committed to this development pattern as clearly identified in its comprehensive plan. The Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority will be extending the metro rail system to Dulles in the next few years with two additional stops - ideally to serve the County's population. The Blue Ridge Mountains are nearby. 25 miles in the other direction is Washington, DC. 46% of Loudoun's working residents work in the County, 10% in Washington, and the remaining 44% work primarily in Northern Virginia. Further, unlike Arlington, Fairfax and many of the other counties in the metro area, land is still available for firms to build to suit. Recreational and cultural activities abound.

All in all, the County is known for its beautiful scenery, rich history, a healthy diversity of expanding business opportunities, comfortable neighborhoods, and high quality public services. In others words, it is well positioned to attract businesses.

HISTORY

Rich in history, Loudoun County constituted a part of the five million acre Northern Neck of Virginia Proprietary granted by King Charles II of England to seven noblemen in 1649. Settlement of the area began in the 1720s with the first inhabitants migrating from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland as well as those from eastern Virginia of English Cavalier stock who came to establish large tobacco plantations. After General Braddock's defeat by the French at Fort Duquesne in 1755, refugees from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia settled in the western

part of Loudoun County, south of Short Hill. Catoctin Church became the center of that settlement.

In 1757, the Virginia House of Burgesses divided Fairfax County and the western portion became Loudoun County. It was named after the Fourth Earl of Loudoun, John Campbell, a Scottish nobleman who served as Commander-in-Chief for all British armed forces in North America and titular Governor of Virginia from 1756 to 1759. Leesburg has been the county seat for almost the entire period.

In 1861, residents of Loudoun County were split over the issue of secession. The Quakers and most of the Germans in northern and central Loudoun opposed slavery and secession, while the landed gentry in the southern part of the county favored secession.

During the Civil War, Colonel John Mosby and his Rangers were active in the area and the county was the home of the Laurel Brigade, a famous Confederate Cavalry unit commanded by Elijah V. White of Leesburg. A national cemetery near Leesburg marks the site of the Battle of Balls Bluff, where Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., then a young Union soldier, fought in 1861. Before the Civil War and afterwards, Loudoun County's rich soil made it a largely agricultural center. In the late 1800s, the county was the fourth largest wheat producer in the U.S. No further, significant changes occurred until the early 1960s when Dulles International Airport opened. Then, as noted, the people and businesses began arriving.

COMMERCE

Dramatic population growth began in the early 1980s followed by suburbanization in the early 1990s. Loudoun now has a full-fledged service economy and is well positioned for the future. It has a thriving economy based on technology, aviation, federal government agencies and contractors as well as science-related businesses. It is home to world headquarters for several technology companies. Verizon Business, the result of Verizon's merger with MCI in 2006, has a major campus in Ashburn. AOL has a significant presence, and **Orbital Sciences Corporation** has its headquarters in Dulles. Telos Corporation and Paxfire are nearby. A number of data centers have made Loudoun their home and more than 50% of the world's Internet traffic passes through the County. It is also home to MC Dean, JK Moving and Storage, NeuStar, and offices of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and FAA.

On the other hand, the western part of the County retains a strong rural economy. Its equine industry produces estimated annual revenues of \$78 million. It is home to the **Morven Park International Equestrian Center** which hosts national horse trials. Direct marketed gross sales for Loudoun's fruits, vegetables, nursery stock and wineries in 2007 were \$25.2 million. The county's growing wine industry has produced several internationally recognized wines. Loudoun now has **22 wineries**. From farmers markets to Loudoun's Destination Restaurants, the rural economy continues to grow and explore new marketing opportunities.

Overall, companies with more than 100 employees comprise only three percent of the total number of businesses in Loudoun, but account for 55% of employment. Nearly 85% of Loudoun's businesses employ fewer than 25 people. Over 35 foreign-owned companies are located in Loudoun County.

GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHICS AND CLIMATE

Loudoun County covers 521 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Potomac River and Maryland; on the south by Prince William and Fauquier Counties; and on the west by the watershed of the Blue Ridge Mountains; and on the east by Fairfax County. The Bull Run Mountains and Catoctin Mountain cross the county.

With a population of 289,737, the county has slightly over 100,000 housing units, and slightly more females than males. Approximately 30% of the population is under the age of 18; 65% between 18 and 65; the remaining 5% are 65 and older. The three primary racial groups in the county are White (73%); Asian (12%); and African American (8%). Approximately 25% of the population speaks a language other than English at home. The latest reported median family income is \$131,700. As of 2000, 92.5% of the population over 25 years of age is a high school graduate and, as previously noted, 58% hold at least a Bachelor's degree.

The County has all four seasons. During the winter months, the high temperatures average in the mid to low 40's with an average low around 25° F. Summer temperatures have average highs in the mid 80's and average lows in the low 60's. Annual average rainfall is approximately 41 inches.

THE GOVERNMENT

Loudoun County is governed by a nine-member Board of Supervisors under Virginia's Traditional Form of Government. The Chairman is elected at large while the other Supervisors represent eight geographic districts. All nine members serve four year terms and are elected at the same time. The next election will be held in 2011.

The Board appoints a County Administrator (who oversees the county's day-to-day operations), the Planning Commission (which advises on land use issues), and various other boards and commissions. In 1995 the Board created the Economic Development Commission (EDC), a public/private partnership responsible for promoting economic development in the County. The Rural Economic Development Council (REDC) was created by the Board in 2000 to promote the growth of the County's rural economy and to provide advice and recommendations to the Board. The present County Administrator joined Loudoun in December 2009. The previous County Administrator served in that capacity for eighteen (18) years. Other elected Constitutional Officers include the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Commissioner of the Revenue, Commonwealth's Attorney, Sheriff, and Treasurer.

The County currently has an operating budget of \$1.14 billion. Of that, \$720 million is allocated to the school system, \$370 million for the general government and \$10 million for the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth (CSA). Additionally, the adopted budget includes \$160 million for annual debt service (\$120.6 million for the school system and \$39.4 million for general government projects). The Board also adopted an amended Capital Improvement Program (CIP) totaling about \$1.01 billion for FY 2011-FY 2016. The school portion of the CIP totals \$422.9 million, including plans for funding four elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools, as well as renovations to two elementary schools and one high school.

While Loudoun has been affected by the slowing of the national economy, and has faced major fiscal challenges, the government has not altered its commitment to sustaining a high quality of life and not just viable, but thriving communities. As a result, Loudoun has consistently received high marks from respondents to countywide surveys. County residents report being very pleased with their quality of life, the caliber of county services, and the value they receive for their tax dollars. Another key indicator reflecting the County's commitment to excellence is its AAA bond ratings, which have been consistently reaffirmed by the three bond rating agencies.

Loudoun County is also among the most technologically advanced county governments in the nation as revealed in a survey conducted by the Center for Digital Government. Loudoun ranked first in the nation among county governments in its population category for the innovative use of technology to deliver services to citizens.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LOUDOUN COUNTY

Loudoun County has a national competitive advantage in several key industry clusters due to an attractive mix of intellectual resources, supportive institutions, suppliers and business-critical infrastructure. Its cluster-based economic development strategy also supports and strengthens rural business industries, such as wineries and high-value agriculture, while continuing to promote Loudoun's towns as business incubators, retail outlets and tourist destinations. An extension of Metrorail from Washington, D.C., to Loudoun is now in the design phase – a development that will also contribute to Loudoun's formidable competitive advantage and is estimated to be completed in 2016.

The County's Economic Development Department reports to the County Administrator and has a budget of nearly \$2 million. The staff of 16 is competent and well respected by the business community. It works collaboratively with a number of local organizations such as the County's Economic Development Commission, Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Development Center, Visit Loudoun (formerly the Loudoun Convention and Visitors Association), the CEO Cabinet, the Industrial Development Authority and the Rural Economic Development Council as well as Loudoun's seven incorporated towns. The staff is accustomed to working independently and creatively. The current interim director is bringing some additional structure to the organization. One of his early efforts was to bring the Department together to develop the

following mission statement, “To promote economic growth and opportunity by attracting targeted new businesses, supporting existing businesses and cultivating our rural economy.”

As part of the effort the County developed a 14 point strategy. The Department is now focused on three areas: (1) Branding; (2) Business development, particularly on selected business clusters, and (3) Developing a stable, predictable regulatory environment.

THE ISSUES

Loudoun County has been affected by the slowing of the national economy, and a property value decline. Like other local governments in the region and across the country, it faces fiscal challenges to continue to provide high quality and vital public services to a growing population in the face of a declining revenue base. From an economic development perspective, the County has grown very quickly. The County’s leaders have come to understand that a strong commercial base is critical and that residential development alone will not generate the revenues necessary to sustain the type and level of governmental services that are presently provided. There is also consensus that the County must have a clear vision for its economic future which includes a stable and predictable regulatory environment. Loudoun’s Economic Development Director will be expected to develop the plan to implement the community’s plan.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Briefly stated, Loudoun County is seeking a strong, savvy and seasoned leader. To receive consideration, candidates must have a proven and demonstrably successful track record in economic development. We are interested in proactive people who are achievement oriented and who will roll up their sleeves to get things done. Experience in government is a plus but not essential. The successful candidate will have strong management skills encompassing both people and projects. The individual will understand the complexities of local and regional economic development and be a part of the regional programs. Knowledge of Loudoun County or a similarly diverse local environment is highly desirable. He/she will be comfortable being in the public eye and with the media – Loudoun has three weekly newspapers that cover county government extensively. While the next Director will work most closely with business people, county staff and the members of the Board of Supervisors, she/he will also be comfortable dealing with the other elements of the community. Outstanding communications skills are a must as is the ability to represent the County and sell it to businesses that are looking for a great location. Understanding what information can be shared and when, is as important as understanding development from the point of view of both the government and the business owner. In particular, the successful candidate will recognize the need for timely and predictable decisions and be prepared to work diligently to make those happen. The next Director, however, will also realize that economic development is about retaining and strengthening the businesses you have and that Loudoun’s rural businesses play a significant role in making Loudoun County the very special place it is. Finally, the successful candidate will have outstanding people skills.

The position requires a Master's degree with significant coursework in economic development, planning, business or public administration or a related field, and ten years experience in economic development, planning and/or policy development or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Five years of professional-level experience supervising or managing a complex organization is preferred. But remember, proven track record in economic development is essential.

COMPENSATION

While the salary range is \$89,000 to \$167,000, the County expects to pay between \$125,000 and \$150,000. Benefits are comprehensive and very competitive. The County participates in the Virginia Retirement System's defined benefit plan.

RESIDENCY

Residency in Loudoun County is strongly preferred, but not mandatory.

CONFIDENTIALITY

No candidate names will be released without the candidate's permission. It is expected, however, that when the County gets to the final three candidates some form of public participation will be incorporated in the candidate evaluation process and that those names will be released.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your resume to **RecruitTwo@cb-asso.com** by July 23, 2010. Applications after that date will be considered but we do intend to move quickly so do not delay if you are interested. Questions should be directed to Tom Andrews at (770) 814-0455 or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

THE PROCESS

Applicants will be screened between July 24th and August 23rd. Finalists will be selected in late August and interviews held September 9th and 10th with a selection made shortly thereafter. Ideally, the next Director, Economic Development will start in October 2010.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Director, Economic Development position will serve at the will of the County Administrator.

Loudoun County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity at all levels of its workforce. It encourages minorities and women to apply.