



Panama City Beach, Florida

(Population 12,018)

Panama City Beach is one of Florida's treasures. Legendary white, sugar-sand beaches meet emerald blue waters, with activities ranging from deep sea fishing to snorkeling and diving. The City offers excellent shopping, dining, and golfing. Recently, Golf Digest dubbed Panama City Beach one of America's top three golf towns, and Trip Advisor named St. Andrew's State Park the #2 beach in the nation. The City also hosts the Ford Ironman Florida, one of the best known races on the circuit. With all these awards and events, Panama City Beach still maintains a laid-back attitude that keeps it a destination worth visiting and living.

Panama City Beach is located in the Florida panhandle, between Jacksonville, FL, and New Orleans, LA (it is exactly 292 miles to either location). Panama City Beach occupies one third of an island between the Gulf of Mexico and St. Andrews Bay. Largely uninhabited

until 1960, the area is now a tourist mecca; it is a major destination for college students during spring break, which ushers in the tourist season. Dining opportunities abound in Panama City Beach, dubbed the "Seafood Capitol of the World". The nightlife is also excellent, ranging from open beach bars to the famous Club La Vela, featuring live bands and concert events. New tourist attractions like Pier Park offer shopping, dining, and entertainment all in one location – covering 1 million square feet. High-rise condominiums are also changing the City's landscape, resulting in more tourists and revenue.

Housing is more reasonable than it was a few years ago, with the overall cost of living fairly low. Crime is not a problem; gated communities are few and far between. The schools are consistently rated as "A" or "B". Three hospitals are located within 35

minutes, with every medical discipline available. Unlike many beachfront communities, traffic is not an issue. Although the beachfront road can be crowded during the peak tourist season, the middle beach and back beach roads run parallel and serve as traffic relievers. The new Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport makes Panama City Beach a ready destination with direct flights from many major cities, including Baltimore, Houston, Memphis, and Orlando.

Above all, Panama City Beach is special because of the residents. Most are not originally from Florida, and value creating a welcoming environment for others that come to visit and live. They are like a family pulling together; neighbors knowing neighbors, and everyone helping each other.

History

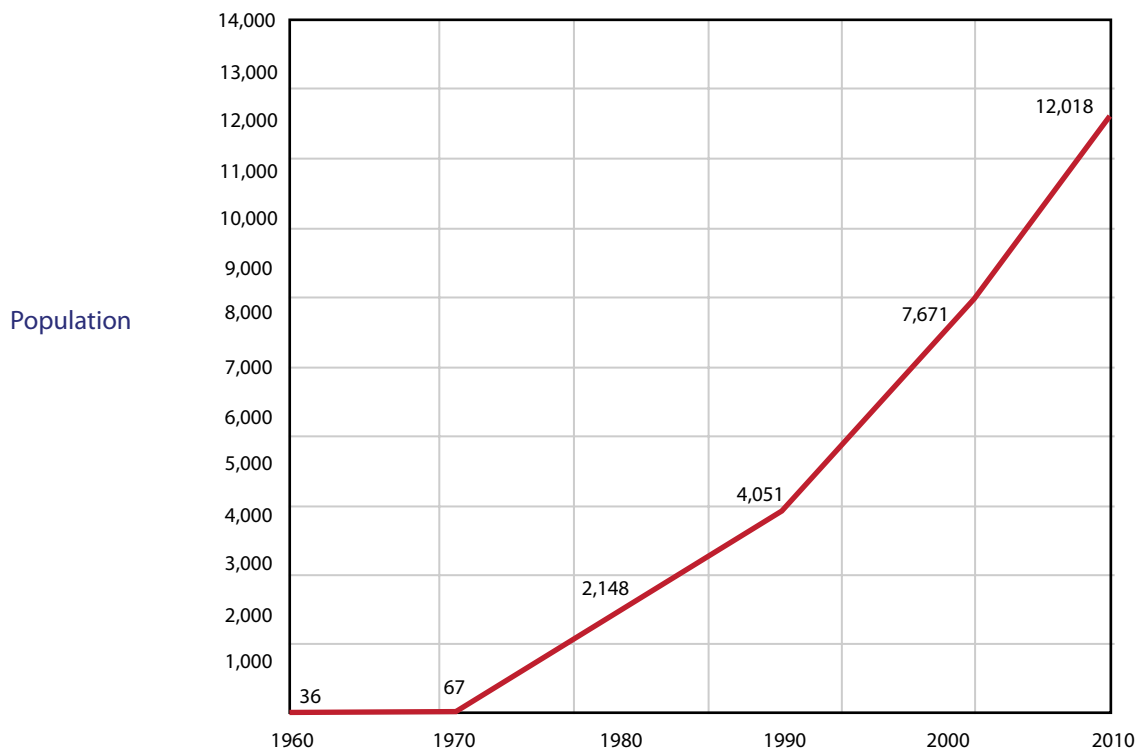
For most of its history, the area of Panama City Beach was a wild stretch of surf and sand. Spanish explorers began to arrive in the 16th century, and later, pirates frequented the coastline. The area remained largely ignored until the 1830's and did not experience a population boom until the 1970's.

Early development efforts began in the 1830's when the St. Andrews Bay Land Company began to promote the area as a seaside resort for families from Alabama and Georgia. During the Civil War, many of the Southern seaports were blockaded, allowing the area to emerge as a salt producing port for the Confederacy. Later, it also developed into a modest fishing industry. In 1883, with the completion of the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad, the area was open for development. At the turn of the 20th century, the Atlanta & St. Andrews Bay Railroad was completed, a sawmill was built, and the lumber industry moved into the area. During the First World War, Millville, the largest city in the area, was the site of barge building for the war effort; however, the area of Panama City Beach was largely ignored.

In 1929, the Hathaway Bridge opened between Panama City and what is now Panama City Beach. Gideon Thomas,



Table I: Panama City Beach Population Growth



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

a local developer, purchased 104 acres of land and built the beginnings of a resort town: a windmill with a water tower, two-story hotel, cottages, and a 1,000 ft. wood pier. The property opened in 1936 and Panama City Beach became a popular tourist destination. Resorts and housing were later built in Long Beach, Laguna Beach, Bahama Beach, and El Centro Beach. In 1953, the area of Panama City Beach was incorporated by merging the communities of Long Beach, Bid-A Wee, Panama City Beach and West Panama City Beach.

The real estate boom began in the early 2000s and the City's image changed. Older homes and older, unattractive motels were replaced with expensive homes and high-rises. Prices skyrocketed and real estate prospects were so promising that in 2006, CNN/Money named Panama City Beach as the top real estate market in America for the next 5 years. Beachfront property has sold for upwards of \$60,000 per "front foot" (linear foot) at the top of the market;

conversely, the decline in the U.S. real estate market has tapered construction in the area. (See Table I for Panama City Beach population growth.)

As a measure of the growth that has occurred over the past 10 years, 60% of the ad valorem taxes the County collects are attributed to Panama City Beach.

Demographics

Panama City Beach has a permanent population of 12,018 and the age distribution is spread out evenly. (See Table II on page 4 for the age breakdown of Panama City Beach.)

Racially, 89% of the population is white with the remainder split between African Americans, those of Asian descent, and other races. Approximately 6% of the population is Hispanic. In keeping with its reputation as a tourist mecca, the City boasts 17,141

units but only 2,885 are owner occupied. The most recent data for income reports the median income per household was \$41,198, and the per capita income was \$26,734.

Geography

Overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, Panama City Beach is located in the Florida Panhandle approximately halfway between Tallahassee (98 miles northeast of the City) and Pensacola (92 miles west). Atlanta is 300 miles northeast, Jacksonville, FL, 300 miles east and Tampa, FL, 380 miles southeast by road. The City is eleven miles long and lies on an island between the Gulf of Mexico and St. Andrews Bay. It is an average 13 feet above sea level and covers 7.0 square miles.

Climate

Panama City Beach has a humid, subtropical climate and experiences four distinct seasons. The summers are hot and humid, and generally last from late May to mid-September. Spring and autumn are generally warm. Winters are mild and last from December to late February. Overall, the area is wet, averaging approximately 61 inches of rain annually. (See Table III for yearly average climate data.)

Hurricanes are common in the area. They either hit or brush by the area every two and a half years with a direct hit every eight years. The average force of a direct hit hurricane is approximately 100 mph; however, hurricanes causing serious damage to the area are rare.

Table II: Age Breakdown – Panama City Beach

Age Bracket	Population	Percentage
0 - 20	2,072	6.7 %
20 - 35	4,160	13.4 %
35 - 50	5,244	16.9 %
50 - 65	3,673	11.9 %
Over 65	595	1.9 %

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Commerce

Panama City Beach’s business is centered on tourism and development. It is estimated that the full-time employment base is 12,000 jobs. The Naval Support Activity Center is located in the City. Its mission is to advance the U.S. Navy’s warfare capabilities. Tyndall Air Force Base is also located just east of Panama City and is a source of employment as well.

The Government

Panama City Beach is governed by a Mayor and four Council Members who serve in a voluntary capacity. The Mayor is directly elected, while Council Members are elected at large to staggered, four year terms. Members must live in their ward, and are not permitted to serve more than eight years as a Council Member and eight years as Mayor. Elections take place in April of even numbered years. Three seats are up for re-election this year and two incumbents (the current

Table II: Temperatures in Panama City Beach

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average High °F	63	66	73	81	86	91	91	91	91	82	73	66	79.3
Average Low °F	37	41	46	52	61	68	72	72	68	55	46	39	54.8

Source: world-guides.com

Mayor and a Commissioner) are running for Mayor. There may be some change in the Commission's composition before we hold interviews for the City Manager position in early May. Debate among Commission Members can be quite spirited and votes are often 3-2. The Council Members all agree that the staff is very capable.

The City's general fund budget (less reserves and inter-fund transfers) is \$17,592,000. The City's departments and their budgets are: Administrative (\$803,000), Comprehensive Planning (\$341,000), Fire (\$3,867,000), Law Enforcement (\$6,590,000), Legislative (\$170,000), Library (\$222,000), Protective Inspections (\$888,000), Recreation (\$2,670,000), and Streets (\$2,039,000). The City has three enterprise funds: Utility (water, sewer and stormwater), the Pier, and the Aquatic Center Fund. Their budgets are respectively: Utility (\$35,513,000), Pier (\$504,000) and Aquatic Center (\$840,000). These numbers reflect the budgets after eliminating inter-fund transfers and reserves. The City's utility also serves the entire island and offers reuse water as well as potable.

Panama City Beach is one of the few cities in Florida without an ad valorem tax. Instead it renders a 1% business tax on all gross sales within its boundaries. The City has approximately 250 employees, and does not have any unions.

The Issues

Panama City Beach is not without challenges, but they are manageable, including: finances, the economy, emergency preparedness, and the transition of the City Manager position. Financially, the City is stable, having not depended on the ad valorem taxes that have been a roller coaster for many local governments in Florida: it is a tax that needs to be monitored. However, the State Legislature is determined to reduce and eliminate taxes to increase growth and business in the state; if it is eliminated, the impact on residents would be dramatic.

The second challenge is striking a balance between tourism, which fuels the economy, and the residents'

quality of life. With spring break, there is an influx of college students who are not always on their best behavior. On the 4th of July, as many as 150,000 visitors may arrive at Panama City Beach. Those events coupled with tourism in general put a strain on the City's budget, as well as the residents' peace of mind. The third issue is emergency preparedness and responsiveness. As noted, the area is hit regularly by tropical storms. The City must always be vigilant and prepared.

The fourth challenge is stepping into the shoes of a local icon – the City Manager has served for 32 years. No matter how smooth the transition is, it will be a jolt to the organization. Additionally, a number of key people are nearing retirement and those positions will need to be filled. Finally, the elected officials expect the new manager to bring a fresh set of eyes to the City. While nothing appears to be broken, some changes are likely given the situation of replacing a long term manager, as well as the lack of issues concerning revenues.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will be an experienced professional with a friendly manner, calm demeanor, and a quick, analytical mind. The individual will have outstanding interpersonal skills, be customer service oriented, and able to communicate easily with people from all walks of life. It is expected that the manager will be out in the community meeting residents and business owners, speaking to groups and acting as a representative of the City. She/he will not accept things as they are because, "they have always been done that way." On the other hand, the manager will value processes and systems that are working well and not make changes simply for the sake of change. The individual will be progressive and proactive in his/her efforts to improve the community's quality of life, while also encompassing patience. A sense of humor and a thick skin is important, as the public and media are not always positive in their comments. As with most city manager positions, the politics can be tricky;

it is important that the manager understand what is happening but not participate.

The ideal candidate will also be a strategic thinker and planner who understands the impact of today's decisions on the future. Working with elected officials, the City Manager will take the City to the next level of achievement. The manager will set high expectations for his/her staff and hold them accountable but will also be a mentor: available to assist when there is a problem. The individual will have an appreciation for technology and how it can maximize the City's resources.

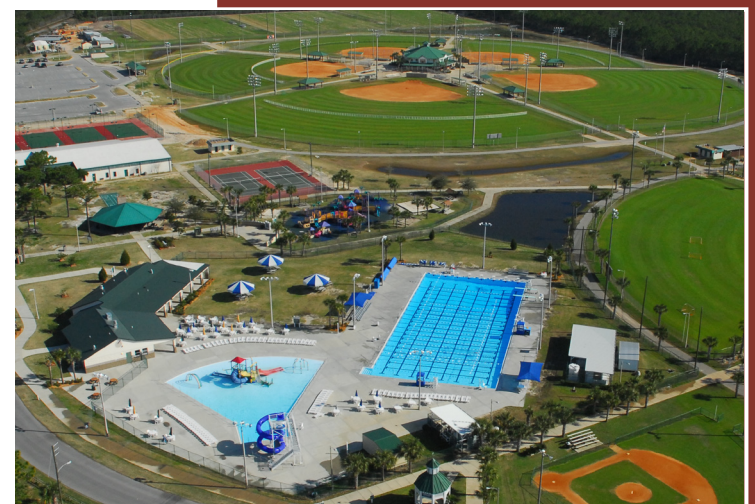
In terms of knowledge, the manager will have a good command of budget and finance and be fiscally conservative. He/she must be able to deal effectively with the press and should be knowledgeable of Florida law. He/she should also have knowledge of coastal communities, redevelopment, and tourism. A bachelor's degree in public administration or closely related field is required and a master's degree preferred. Five years experience as a city or county manager or assistant manager is required; those with ten years as a director or equivalent position in the public/private sector will also be considered. Experience in a Florida local government is desirable.

The Current Manager

The current manager is retiring after 32 years of service to the City. The city manager position was created in 1980 and the current manager is the only person to have served in that position.

Compensation

The starting salary range is from \$ 100,000 - \$125,000 with excellent benefits.



Residency

The City Manager is required to become a resident of the City within six months of taking office.

Confidentiality

Under Florida's public records act, once an application is submitted, it is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, we generally are not asked to divulge applicant names until after the closing date. We do expect some media coverage as the search progresses.

How to Apply

E-mail your resume to Recruit24@cb-asso.com by March 9, 2012. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

The Process

Applications will be screened between March 10th and April 16th. Interviews will be held on May 4th and 5th with a selection shortly thereafter.

Other Important Information

Panama City Beach is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages minorities and women to apply. A veteran's preference will be awarded as applicable under State and Federal law.

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING